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**ENGLISH
GUIDES**
2: WORD FORMATION



**THE UNIVERSITY
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Looking up
The Lexical Syllabus

Foreword

The COBUILD GUIDES each deal with a key area of English. In addition to our general dictionaries and Grammar we have been planning for some time to add smaller but more detailed handbooks dealing with important aspects of grammar and usage.

Each book is specially designed for a specific job. Most have a reference-book style, and some include practice material as well. They are all based on real examples drawn from the 20 million words of the Birmingham Collection of English Text and a further 5 million words from the *Times* newspapers which now form a part of The Bank of English.

The advantages of a Guide which deals with one particular part of English are that there is room for more information than in a big general dictionary, and that this information is easier to find.

Making new words by adapting old ones is very popular at present, and many of the prefixes and suffixes described here are being used freely by writers and speakers of English. This book will give you a similar freedom.

This process of forming new words has been going on throughout the long history of English, and a number of words show by their structure that they were once formed from prefixes and suffixes; where they have become rather specialized in meaning they are listed to remind you to look them up in a dictionary. Many words formed from Greek and Latin prefixes and suffixes are included even though they are not productive in modern English. Showing the way they are formed will help you understand their meanings.

I hope that we have selected useful information and made it easy for you to find what you want, to understand it, and to use it with confidence. Please write to me with any comments or suggestions about how to improve COBUILD publications.

John Sinclair
Editor in Chief
Professor of Modern English Language
University of Birmingham

Introduction

The vocabulary of the English Language is not a fixed list of words but a growing and developing store from which you can select words that are appropriate for your meaning and for the situation you are in. When you look at a large dictionary, you realize that there are an enormous number of words, and it is clearly not possible for one person to know them all. There are, of course, a certain number that you must know in order to be able to communicate in English: the basic verbs *take, have, give, put, set* and so on, and prepositions such as *at, in, of, and on*.

Once you have built up a basic vocabulary of English, you can begin to say what you want to. As you add more and more words to your vocabulary, you are able to express a greater range of ideas or talk about a wider range of topics.

This book is intended to help you increase your vocabulary by describing the patterns involved in building words. Some words are formed by putting a prefix at the beginning of an existing word, and some are formed by adding a suffix at the end. There are also words which have more than one prefix or suffix in them. Once you have learnt the main uses and meanings of a number of prefixes and suffixes, you will be able to recognize and understand a lot more words, even if you have never seen them before. By looking at how the word is used, and adding the meaning of the prefix or suffix to the meaning of the original word, you can work out the meaning of the whole word. Where the use of the prefix or suffix is productive, you will also be able to make up words which you have never seen before.

For example, if you read in a newspaper about a *pan-European agreement*, you might only know the sense of *pan* which refers to a pot that you use for cooking. But *pan-* is also a prefix that means *all of*, so here, a *pan-European agreement* is an agreement which involves all the countries in Europe. This is different from an *anti-European* movement, which would be a movement that worked against Europe. Both these prefixes, *pan-* and *anti-*, can occur in front of a large number of words. Once you have learnt the use of a number of prefixes, you will be able not only to recognize more words but also to make some up and use them yourself.

Other prefixes and suffixes are largely grammatical, and are used to change the word class of a word. For example, the suffix *-ion* is added to verbs to create nouns. So if you see a word that ends in *ion* you should check the first part of the word and see if it looks like a

verb. If it does, then by combining the context with what you know about the meaning of the verb, you can often work out what the noun means.

This book contains a description of the use and meaning of about 300 prefixes and suffixes. At the end, there are a number of exercises which are designed to help you use the book productively and make use of the information that it contains. A key to the exercises is included.

We believe that using this book will help you to increase your confidence in dealing with words that you have never seen before, and hope that it will prove a useful aid in increasing your vocabulary of English quickly and efficiently.

How to use the book

The Headwords

The book contains an alphabetically ordered set of prefixes and suffixes. Each item has a hyphen either at the beginning or at the end. If the hyphen is at the beginning, then the item is a suffix, and comes at the end of the word. If the hyphen is at the end, then the item is a prefix and comes at the beginning of the word.

If the same form is both a prefix and a suffix, there will be two entries, with the prefix first, then the suffix.

So the order of items starting from **-first** is:

-first
-fold
-folk
fore-
Franco-
free-
-free
fresh-
-ful
full-

The Entries

The Explanations

Each entry tells you what sort of word the prefix or suffix combines with, and what meaning the new words have. These words are illustrated by examples, taken from the 20 million words of the

Birmingham Collection of English Text. Each entry also contains lists of words which are formed in the way described.

Some prefixes and suffixes are very productive. That is to say, they can combine with a large number of words, and you can make up words yourself once you feel confident enough. These items are indicated by the heading **PRODUCTIVE USE**:

The entry tells you whether the word combines with verbs, nouns, or adjectives, and also tells you the word class of the new words. The entry for **under-** begins:

PRODUCTIVE USE: **under-** combines with verbs, nouns, and adjectives to form new verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

The entry then tells you the meaning that is shared by all the words.

Words formed in this way express the idea that there is not enough of something or that something has not been done as much or as well as is needed.

Then there are one or more examples whose meanings are explained:

If you describe something as 'underdeveloped', you think it has not been developed enough.

In some entries, there are spelling notes; these are explained below.

The Examples

All the main entries have several examples which illustrate words that are formed in the way that has just been described. These examples are all taken from the Birmingham Collection of English Text, and show how the words have been used by speakers and writers of English. The examples are printed in *italic*.

Spelling Notes

When there is anything difficult or unusual about how the words are spelled, a spelling note is given. This note tells you the rules for dropping letters or doubling consonants when adding a particular prefix or suffix. There are also notes telling you about whether you should write the words with a hyphen or not. If there is not a note about hyphenation, then you should consult the list of words in that paragraph for guidance.

The Lists

After the examples, there is a list of words. When the use is productive, the list contains a selection of words that are formed in

this way, but you can build further words for yourself. This type of list is headed

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Some prefixes combine freely with numbers or place names, and where this is the case, words formed in that way are not included in the lists.

If the use is not very productive, the list will again contain a selection of words, but you should be cautious about trying to form words like that yourself. This list will be headed

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Sometimes there are words which begin with the same letters as a prefix, or end in the same letters as a suffix, but which are not actually examples of that particular prefix or suffix, or do not fit with the meanings that have been given. Important words like this are listed at the end of the entries, after the heading

Words with other meanings

Often, they will be words which you know, but if you do not know them, look them up in a dictionary, because their meaning cannot be derived from the prefix or suffix.

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-able

a-

a- occurs in words which have 'not', 'without', or 'opposite to' as part of their meaning. For example, someone who is 'apolitical' has no opinions about political matters and takes no interest in them; someone who is 'amoral' has no moral standards or principles.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aformal	apolitical	asexual	atypical
amoral	asensual	asocial	
aphasic	aseptic	atonal	

-ability

-ability replaces '-able' at the end of adjectives ending in '-able' to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or quality described by the adjective.

Note that the nouns formed from 'unable' and 'unstable' are 'inability' and 'instability'.

...the ready availability of fresh fish from the sea.

Acrylic blankets have the best combination of warmth and washability.

...the likeability of George Brown.

For more information see **-able**.

-able

1 Possibility

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-able** combines with verbs to form adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something that is affected by the action or process described by the verb. For example, if someone has 'admirable' qualities, they have qualities that other people admire; if something is 'avoidable', it can be avoided.

Spelling: A final 'e' is removed before adding **-able**, except when it occurs after a 'c' or a 'g'. A final 'y' after a consonant is replaced by 'i' before adding **-able**. A final 'ate' is replaced by **-able**.

Her progress was slow in spite of her admirable determination.

Deaths caused by reckless driving are avoidable.

Edward was a mischievous but lovable child.

-able

Acrylic blankets and shawls are both warm and washable.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

acceptable	desirable	manageable	recognizable
admirable	disposable	noticeable	remarkable
adorable	enjoyable	peelable	tolerable
advisable	identifiable	predictable	understandable
comparable	imaginable	preferable	variable
dependable	irritable	profitable	washable

Note that a number of adjectives formed from verbs and with this meaning end in '-ible' rather than **-able**.

For more information see **-ible**.

2 Having certain qualities

-able combines with nouns to form adjectives that describe someone or something as having the qualities or characteristics referred to by the original noun. For example, if something is 'comfortable', it gives comfort; if a particular style of clothing is 'fashionable', it is in fashion.

...the comfortable feeling of security and ease that his company gave her.

*...one of his habitual striped shirts that were fashionable in 1963.
Critics argued that the only honourable course of action open to him was resignation.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

comfortable	honourable	pleasurable
fashionable	knowledgeable	valuable

Words with other meanings

agreeable	companionable	miserable	sizeable
amiable	considerable	parable	sociable
arable	damnable	personable	suitable
available	habitable	practicable	tenable
capable	hospitable	reasonable	veritable
charitable	memorable	reputable	

aero-

aero- occurs in words which have 'air' or 'air travel' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'aeroplane' is a vehicle that flies through

after-

the air; an 'aerodrome' is a place where small aircraft can land and take off.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aerodrome	aerofoil	aeronautics
aerodynamic	aerograph	aeroplane
aeroengines	aeronaut	aerospace

Words with other meanings

aerobic	aerobics	aerosol
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after-

1 Timing of activities

PRODUCTIVE USE: **after-** combines with nouns that refer to an activity or event in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that happens after a particular activity or event, which is specified in the adjective formed. For example, 'after-school' activities take place when lessons have finished for the day; you drink an 'after-dinner' drink after eating your dinner.

After-school play centres are valuable for all children.
We had an after-dinner drink in the bar.
...the inadequate provision of after-sales service.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

after-dinner	after-lunch	after-school
after-hours	after-sales	after-work

2 Results

PRODUCTIVE USE: **after-** combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to one thing that happens as a result of another. For example, an 'aftertaste' is a taste that remains after you have eaten something; the 'after-effects' of an activity or an event are the feelings, illness, or condition that result from it, and that usually remain for a long time afterwards.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

...the bitter aftertaste sometimes caused by saccharine.
There was a faint afterglow from the sunset.

after-

Alas, in practice, the after-care of elderly patients leaves a great deal to be desired.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

after-care	afterglow	afterpain	after-smell
after-effects	after-image	aftershock	aftertaste

Words with other meanings

afterbirth	afternoon	afterward
afterlife	aftershave	afterwards
aftermath	afterthought	afterworld

-age

1 A process or state

-age combines with verbs, nouns, and adjectives to form new nouns. Words formed in this way refer to a process, the result of a process, or a state. For example, 'leakage' can refer to the process of leaking, or to the liquid or gas which escapes from a container when it leaks; a 'shortage' is a situation when there is not enough of something, or when the supply of something begins to decrease.

Our fuel was almost gone due to a mysterious leakage from the containers.

The South-east has already been hit by a shortage of skilled labour. All breakages must be paid for.

When buying material allow 10 per cent extra for shrinkage.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

assemblage	drainage	marriage	slippage	storage
blockage	leakage	seepage	spillage	wastage
breakage	leverage	shortage	spoilage	wreckage
coverage	linkage	shrinkage	stoppage	

2 Measurement

-age combines with nouns which refer to units of measurement to form new nouns which refer to a measurement made in the units indicated by the noun. For example, 'mileage' is the distance that a person or vehicle has travelled, measured in miles; 'voltage' is an electrical force measured in volts.

...the approximate mileage for the complete journey.

Colour monitors run at a higher voltage than monochrome ones.

-aholic, -oholic

The connecting pipelines would require little acreage and could be buried if necessary.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

acreage	mileage	tonnage
footage	percentage	voltage
litreage	poundage	yardage

Words with other meanings

advantage	cottage	luggage	patronage
anchorage	damage	manage	peerage
average	disadvantage	massage	pilgrimage
baggage	dosage	message	postage
bandage	garage	orphanage	sewage
barrage	garbage	outrage	sewerage
carriage	hostage	package	vicarage
coinage	language	passage	village

agro-

agro- occurs in words which have 'soil' or 'agriculture' as part of their meaning. For example, 'agrochemicals' are chemicals such as pesticides that are used in agriculture; 'agrology' is the study of soils and their productivity.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

agrochemical	agrology	agronomist	agronomy
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-aholic, -oholic

-aholic or **-oholic** is derived from the word 'alcoholic', which describes someone who is addicted to alcohol.

-aholic combines with nouns and verbs to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a person who needs, wants, or likes a particular thing so much that they appear to be addicted to it. For example, a 'chocoholic' is someone who cannot stop eating chocolate; a 'workaholic' is someone who is obsessed with their work and spends most of their time working.

Spelling: The noun formed from 'chocolate' is 'chocoholic'.

Note that it is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **-aholic** to nouns. However, words formed in this way are very informal and are usually intended to be humorous. Few of them occur frequently.

We've become a nation of chocoholics.

-aholic, -oholic

*A cashaholic is someone who's hopeless with money.
The author describes himself as a writaholic.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bookaholic	chocoholic	shopaholic	writaholic
cashaholic	newsaholic	workaholic	

-al

1 Connection

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-al** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that is connected with the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, 'environmental' problems are related to the environment; something that is 'accidental' happens by accident.

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'ical' rather than **-al**. 'ial' is sometimes used instead of **-al**, especially with nouns ending in 'er', 'or', and 'ent'.

...environmental pollution and the erosion of natural resources.

...a treaty to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war.

Some of the clothes worn were national costume.

...the performance of his presidential duties.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

accidental	environmental	musical	professional
additional	experimental	national	regional
classical	fanatical	occasional	residential
continental	geographical	oriental	sceptical
conventional	global	original	sensational
conversational	governmental	ornamental	sentimental
cynical	historical	parental	statistical
departmental	institutional	philosophical	traditional
educational	logical	political	transitional
emotional	mechanical	presidential	vocational

Note that **-al** sometimes combines with adjectives ending in '-ic' to form new adjectives with the same meaning. For example, 'comical' means the same as comic; 'electrical' means the same as electric.

He filled the frequent silences with comical anecdotes.

...two small electrical screwdrivers.

He smiled a friendly, slightly ironical smile.

2 Actions

-al combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the action or process described by the verb. For example, a

all-

'denial' is a statement that denies something such as an accusation; the 'withdrawal' of something is the process or action of withdrawing it.

The New York Evening Post reported Sherman's denial of the accusation.

...the Cuban withdrawal from Angola.

Twelve employees made a complaint of unfair dismissal.

...a gradual renewal of links with the mainland.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

avowal	burial	disavowal	renewal
bestowal	committal	dismissal	rental
betrayal	denial	portrayal	withdrawal

Words with other meanings

banal	incidental	mineral	provisional	special
canal	internal	minimal	sandal	verbal
editorial	marshal	normal	several	
impartial	medical	personal	signal	

all-

1 One thing or quality

PRODUCTIVE USE: **all-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that consists entirely of the thing referred to by the noun, or that only has those qualities described by the original adjective. For example, if a piece of clothing is 'all-wool', it is made entirely out of wool; if a group of people is 'all-male', it consists only of men.

That sweater was all-wool.

...the all-electric, automatic kitchen.

...the creation of an all-volunteer army.

...an all-steel umpire's chair.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

all-acrylic	all-electric	all-rubber	all-white
all-action	all-female	all-star	all-woman
all-aluminium	all-grey	all-steel	all-wood
all-black	all-male	all-union	all-wool
all-cash	all-new	all-volunteer	

2 Every type

PRODUCTIVE USE: **all-** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that is suitable

all-

for or includes every type of a particular thing. For example, an 'all-weather' football pitch can be used in every kind of weather condition; an 'all-purpose' glue can be used for any type of repairs.

It has an all-weather pitch which will be used for the cricket event.
The campaign commanded all-party support.
...an all-sports channel, with live broadcasts.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

all-age	all-party	all-season	all-weather
all-function	all-purpose	all-sports	

3 Affecting everyone or everything

all- combines with present participles to form adjectives which describe something that includes or affects everyone or everything. For example, if someone is 'all-loving', they love everyone; if something is 'all-pervading', it is present or is felt everywhere in a particular place.

Note that words formed in this way are often literary or very formal, and very few of them occur frequently.

Mother presents herself as all-loving.
An all-pervading dishonesty hung over our enterprise.
Her all-consuming passions were kangaroos and rabbits.
...the camera's all-seeing eye.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

all-absorbing	all-engulfing	all-loving
all-conquering	all-enveloping	all-pervading
all-consuming	all-giving	all-prevailing
all-demanding	all-inclusive	all-seeing
all-embracing	all-invading	
all-encompassing	all-knowing	

Words with other meanings

all-clear	all-fours	all-night	all-round
all-comers	all-important	all-out	
all-day	all-in	all-powerful	

-an

-an combines with the names of places to form words which describe someone or something that comes from the place mentioned. For example, an 'American' is a person who comes from the United States of America; 'Australian' wine is produced in Australia.

-ance

Spelling: A final 'a' is replaced by **-an**. A final 'y' is replaced by 'ian'. When the place name ends in a consonant, 'ian' is added to the end.

...an American airline pilot.

Among the journalists were two Russians.

Many people these days prefer Italian clothes.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

African	Brazilian	Hungarian	Nigerian
Algerian	Bulgarian	Indian	Persian
American	Californian	Indonesian	Russian
Angolan	Cambodian	Iranian	Scandinavian
Arabian	Chilean	Italian	Sicilian
Armenian	Cuban	Jamaican	Syrian
Asian	Egyptian	Jordanian	
Australian	Ethiopian	Korean	
Austrian	European	Libyan	

There are some exceptions to the general rules. Here is a list of words formed in an irregular way:

Argentinian	Canadian	Norwegian	Ukrainian
Belgian	Moroccan	Palestinian	

-ance

1 With verbs

-ance combines with some verbs to form nouns which refer to the action, process, or state indicated by the verb. For example, 'admittance' is the act of entering a place or being allowed to enter it; 'observance' is the process of observing something.

Spelling: A final 'ate' is replaced by **-ance**.

A dozen officers stood at the front porch, waiting for admittance.

...Rothermere's observance of the comet.

Through the war America confirmed her position of global dominance.

...his meek acceptance of the insult.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

acceptance	attendance	endurance	performance
admittance	clearance	entrance	radiance
alliance	defiance	guidance	reliance
appearance	disappearance	insurance	resemblance
assistance	disturbance	maintenance	resistance
assurance	dominance	observance	tolerance

-ance

2 With adjectives

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ance** replaces 'ant' at the end of adjectives to form nouns that refer to the state or quality described by the adjective. For example, 'arrogance' is the quality of being arrogant; 'elegance' is the quality of being elegant.

'I ought to be chief,' said Jack with simple arrogance.
The table was laid with more elegance than usual.
She accepted his gifts with some reluctance.
A matter of overwhelming importance occurred to him.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

abundance	fragrance	invariance	repugnance
arrogance	ignorance	irrelevance	significance
brilliance	importance	petulance	vigilance
elegance	insignificance	predominance	
extravagance	intemperance	preponderance	
exuberance	intolerance	reluctance	

Words with other meanings

accordance	allowance	inheritance	surveillance
acquaintance	appliance	instance	vengeance
allegiance	grievance	renaissance	

Anglo-

Anglo- occurs in words which have 'England' or 'Britain' as part of their meaning. For example, 'Anglo-American' relations are the relations between Britain and America.

-ant

1 Occupations and participation

-ant combines with verbs to form nouns which refer to somebody who does a particular thing. For example, an 'assistant' is somebody who helps or assists another person; a 'contestant' is somebody who competes for a prize in a contest or competition.

Spelling: A final 'ate', 'y', or 'e' is replaced by **-ant**.

She was now the assistant cook in the house.
The first prize will be awarded to the contestant who correctly identifies the famous personalities.
...a participant in a radio programme about writing.

ante-

The officer gave the attendant a hearty slap on the back.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accountant	attendant	contestant	emigrant	occupant
applicant	claimant	defendant	immigrant	participant
assailant	combatant	dependant	informant	servant
assistant	consultant	descendant	inhabitant	

Note that a 'confidant' is not someone who confides, but the person who is confided in.

2 Things which have an effect

-ant combines with verbs to form nouns which refer to an object or substance which has a particular effect. For example, a 'coolant' is a liquid used to keep a machine cool while it is operating; a 'pollutant' is a substance which pollutes the environment.

...a refrigerator using a new 'ozone friendly' compound as its coolant.

Is there some additive or pollutant in your water?

He wiped the table with disinfectant.

Economic issues are the main determinant of political attitudes.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accelerant	decongestant	determinant	pollutant
contaminant	defoliant	disinfectant	sealant
coolant	depressant	lubricant	

3 Adjectives

-ant also occurs in adjectives, many of which are formed from stems which are not current words in English.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

abundant	constant	ignorant	pleasant	significant
adamant	distant	important	pregnant	tolerant
arrogant	dominant	indignant	redundant	triumphant
brilliant	elegant	instant	relevant	vacant
buoyant	extravagant	militant	reluctant	

ante-

ante- occurs in some words which have 'before' as part of their meaning. For example, if one thing 'antedates' another, it happened or existed before the other; an 'anteroom' is a small room where people can wait before going into a larger room.

ante-

For more information on words that have 'before' as part of their meaning, see **pre-**.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

antecedent	antedate	ante-natal
antechamber	antediluvian	anteroom

anthrop-

anthrop- occurs in words which have 'people' as part of their meaning. For example, 'anthropology' is the study of people, society, and culture; a 'philanthropic' organization gives money and help to people who need it.

Note that **anthrop-** sometimes occurs in the middle of words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anthropocentric	anthropomorphic	philanthropist
anthropoid	anthropomorphism	philanthropy
anthropologist	misanthropy	
anthropology	philanthropic	

anti-

1 Opposition

PRODUCTIVE USE: **anti-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form words which describe someone or something that is opposed to the thing referred to or described by the original noun or adjective. For example, if somebody is 'anti-war', they are opposed to war; 'anti-colonialism' is the belief that colonialism is wrong.

*She had become involved, as a student, in anti-racist movements.
...a big demonstration in town during the height of the anti-war movement.*

*An anti-EEC resolution was passed.
...an intensification of the international anti-apartheid campaign.
...the group which ran the anti-census campaign in 1985.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

anti-abortion	anti-colonial	anti-marriage
anti-aggression	anti-communist	anti-Marxist
anti-apartheid	anti-democratic	anti-nuclear
anti-authority	anti-discrimination	anti-racist
anti-British	anti-EEC	anti-religious
anti-capitalist	anti-establishment	anti-vivisection
anti-catholic	anti-fascist	anti-war
anti-census	anti-government	

arch-

Note that **anti-** is often used in this way with names.

The anti-Dukakis campaign has worked most effectively in Texas.

...calls for an anti-Thatcher coalition.

Revolutionaries were trying to start an anti-Wilson movement in the party.

2 Prevention

PRODUCTIVE USE: **anti-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form words which describe one thing as being intended to prevent or destroy another. For example, an 'anti-depressant' is a drug which prevents people from being depressed; an 'anti-tank' weapon is designed to destroy military tanks.

He no longer takes anti-depressants or tranquillizers.

Mike's brother, an inventor, was in trouble with the police because his anti-car-thief device was dangerous.

...an anti-cholesterol drug.

...anti-submarine torpedos.

The anti-fraud unit had now been set up.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

anti-aircraft	anti-cholesterol	anti-fungal	anti-pollution
anti-bacterial	anti-coagulant	anti-infection	anti-rust
anti-burglar	anti-depressant	anti-inflation	anti-seasickness
anti-cancer	anti-fraud	anti-invasion	anti-submarine
anti-car-thief	anti-freeze	anti-missile	anti-tank

Words with other meanings

antibody	anti-clockwise	antimatter
Antichrist	anti-cyclone	antiseptic
anti-climax	antihero	antithesis

aqua-

aqua- occurs in words which have 'water' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'aqualung' is a piece of equipment which provides divers with air when they are underwater; an 'aquarium' is a glass tank filled with water which is used to keep fish in.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aqualung aquarium aquatic

arch-

1 Higher rank

arch- combines with nouns that refer to someone's position in the aristocracy or in the Church in order to form new nouns. Nouns

arch-

formed in this way refer to people who have reached the highest position possible. For example, an 'archdeacon' is a deacon of the highest rank; an 'archduke' is a member of the aristocracy who has a higher rank than a duke.

The archdeacon said that cruelty to animals was worse than ever before.

...the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

archangel	archdeacon	archduke
archbishop	archduchess	

Note that the 'ch' is pronounced as in 'change' in all these words except in 'archangel' where it is pronounced as a 'k'.

2 More extreme

PRODUCTIVE USE: **arch-** combines with nouns that refer to people who are opposed to something or who are considered to be bad in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to people who are extreme representatives of whatever the original noun refers to. For example, your 'arch-rival' in a competition is the competitor whom you most want to beat; someone's 'arch-enemy' is their most hated enemy.

Mr Boris Yeltsin called yesterday for the removal of his arch-rival, Mr Yegor Ligachev and two other members of the Politburo.
The arch-sinner, deserving the most horrible punishment in Christian theory, was Judas Iscariot.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

arch-capitalist	arch-fiend	arch-rival
arch-communist	arch-manipulator	arch-sinner
arch-enemy	arch-opponent	arch-traitor
arch-exploiter	arch-rebel	arch-villain

-archy

-archy occurs in words which have 'rule' or 'government' as part of their meaning. For example, the political 'hierarchy' is the group of people in politics who have the power; an 'oligarchy' is a small group of people who control and run a particular country or organization.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anarchy	matriarchy	oligarchy	squirearchy
hierarchy	monarchy	patriarchy	

-ary

-arian

-arian occurs in nouns which indicate that someone or something is associated with a particular thing. For example, a 'librarian' is someone who works in a library; a 'vegetarian' is someone who eats mainly vegetables because they do not eat meat or fish.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

agrarian	egalitarian	parliamentarian	unitarian
authoritarian	humanitarian	sabbatarian	vegetarian
communitarian	libertarian	sectarian	veterinarian
disciplinarian	librarian	totalitarian	

-ary

1 Forming adjectives

-ary combines with nouns and occasionally verbs to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something that is connected to, involves, or shares some of the characteristics of the things referred to by the original nouns or verbs. For example, if you say something 'complimentary' to someone, you pay them a compliment; if something is 'imaginary', someone has imagined it.

His action is not insulting; it is meant to be complimentary.
...an ineffable joy sometimes so momentary it almost goes unnoticed.
He admired the troops rather as though they were legendary figures in a history book.
...tantalizingly fragmentary snatches of news.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cautionary	discretionary	momentary	residuary
complementary	fragmentary	monetary	rudimentary
complimentary	honorary	parliamentary	salutary
customary	imaginary	planetary	secondary
dietary	inflationary	precautionary	supplementary
disciplinary	legendary	probationary	voluntary

Note that there are a number of adjectives ending in **-ary** that are formed from stems which are not current words in English.

She had invented and imposed routine, but it seemed arbitrary and superficial.

-ary

We cooked spinach pies and other culinary delights.

Here is a list of words formed in this way:

ancillary	culinary	military	sanitary
arbitrary	extraordinary	necessary	sedentary
auxiliary	hereditary	ordinary	solitary
binary	incendiary	preliminary	subsidiary
contemporary	literary	primary	temporary
contrary	mercenary	proprietary	veterinary

2 Forming nouns

-ary also occurs in nouns. Some of these nouns refer to people. For example, a 'missionary' is a person who is a member of a religious mission; your 'adversary' is a person who is opposing you or who holds an adverse point of view.

*The missionary schools sought to produce converts to Christianity.
Wells was a great visionary, but not visionary enough to foresee computers.*

*... his secretary, typist, clerk and book-keeper.
Neither would launch an attack upon the homeland of its adversary.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

actuary	beneficiary	luminary	secretary
adversary	dignitary	missionary	visionary
antiquary	emissary	notary	voluptuary
apothecary	intermediary	prebendary	

Some of these nouns refer to places where something is kept or done. For example, a 'mortuary' is a building or room where dead bodies are kept before they are buried or cremated; a 'dispensary' is a place where medicines are prepared and dispensed.

Before the funeral the body was in a mortuary in King William's Town.

*It will be an aviary; the grounds, the park, will be a bird sanctuary.
It will be possible to store large books on a microchip and a whole library in a space about the size of a paperback.
...a nurse in the infirmary.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

apiary	granary	mortuary	seminary
aviary	infirmary	penitentiary	
dispensary	library	sanctuary	

auto-

Words with other meanings

anniversary	centenary	glossary	summary
boundary	commentary	itinerary	tributary
burglary	constabulary	obituary	vocabulary
bursary	dictionary	ovary	
canary	documentary	quandary	
capillary	estuary	salary	

astr-

astr- occurs in words which have 'star' or 'space' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'astronomer' is a scientist who studies the stars; an 'astronaut' is trained to fly in a spacecraft.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

astral	astrology	astronomy
astrolabe	astronaut	astrophysicist
astrologer	astronomer	astrophysics

-ation

See -ion.

audio-

audio- occurs in words which have 'sound' or 'hearing' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'audio-typist' is someone who types letters and reports that have been dictated into a tape-recorder.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

audio-cassette	audio-tape	audio-typist	audio-visual
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auto-

1 Automatic

auto- combines with nouns and verbs to form new nouns and verbs. Words formed in this way describe a device or mechanism that works automatically, without having to be operated by a person. For example, an 'auto-timer' turns something such as a cooker on and off at times which have been set in advance; if a machine such as a video-recorder 'auto-records' a programme, it records it automatically at a time which has been set in advance.

Note that this use of **auto-** is an abbreviation of 'automatic'.

auto-

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

*Auto-timers on cookers will have to be reset after a power cut.
...a fifty-watt six speaker stereo with an auto-reverse cassette player.
...microwave ovens with an auto-cook device.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

auto-cook	autodial	autoredial	auto-timer
autocue	auto-play	auto-reverse	
auto-defrost	auto-record	auto-rotate	

2 Oneself

auto- occurs in words which express the idea that someone does something to, for, or about themselves. For example, your 'autobiography' is an account of your life which you have written yourself; a country or group of people that is 'autonomous' is governed or controlled by itself rather than by others.

*In his own autobiography, Attlee makes no mention of the report.
The paper's editorial department was totally autonomous.
He signed an autograph for her grandson.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

autobiography	autonomous	auto-suggestion
autograph	autonomy	

3 Cars

auto- combines with nouns to form new nouns which refer to something that is connected with cars. For example, the 'auto-industry' is the car manufacturing industry; 'autosport' is another name for motor racing.

Note that this use of **auto-** is an abbreviation of 'automobile' or 'automotive'.

*Auto-industry experts say General Motors and Ford will have to work even harder than usual next year.
...the RAC autosport rally championship in Hampshire.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

auto-industry	autosport	autoworker
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-based

1 The major part of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-based** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that the thing referred to by the original noun is the most important part or feature of something. For example, an 'acid-based' powder has acid as its main ingredient; 'computer-based' teaching relies heavily on the use of computers.

...an acid-based powder supplied to police forces all over the world to trace fingerprints on paper.

Traditional class-based loyalties were breaking down.

...the nineteenth-century coal-based industrial economy.

...petroleum-based detergents.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

acid-based	export-based	mercury-based	project-based
cash-based	fuel-based	money-based	property-based
class-based	hydrogen-based	nitrogen-based	protein-based
coal-based	lead-based	nuclear-based	science-based
computer-based	leisure-based	oil-based	service-based
education-based	market-based	petroleum-based	water-based

Note that **-based** sometimes combines in this way with adjectives.

Many are religious-based schools.

2 The basis of something

-based combines with adjectives and adverbs such as 'broad', 'broadly', 'widely', and 'solidly' to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe the qualities of the basis of something, rather than telling you what it is composed of. The adjectives formed typically describe such things as governments, beliefs, and movements.

We want to develop it into a broadly-based industrial group.

The anti-war movement had become more broad-based and less radical.

We should build up a firmly-based, democratic administration in Hong Kong.

...a widely-based dialogue.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

broad-based	firmly-based	soundly-based
broadly-based	solidly-based	widely-based

-based

3 Places

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-based** combines with nouns and adjectives that refer to places, or with adjectives of nationality, to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as being positioned or existing mainly in a particular place, or as being organized from that place. For example, if an industry is 'British-based', most of its operations take place in Britain.

...a British-based engineering group.

...smaller, community-based hospitals.

Home-based industry may be severely shaken by higher interest rates.

...Reuters, the London-based news agency.

...ground-based telescopes.

...Mr Tito Tettamanti, a Swiss-based Italian lawyer.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

American-based
Belfast-based
British-based
campus-based
city-based
community-based
country-based
European-based

foreign-based
ground-based
home-based
hospital-based
land-based
London-based
marine-based
ocean-based

overseas-based
Paris-based
school-based
Shanghai-based
shore-based
Swiss-based
town-based
US-based

be-

1 Wearing something or covered with something

be- occurs in adjectives that describe someone or something as wearing something or being covered in a substance. For example, someone who is 'bespectacled' is wearing spectacles; someone who is 'bejewelled' is wearing jewels or is covered in jewels.

...a short, bespectacled man with thinning hair.

...the dignified death of the bewigged Queen of Scots.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bejewelled bespectacled bewigged

2 To cause to become

be- occurs in adjectives and transitive verbs which describe someone or something as being in a particular state or going into that state. For example, someone who is 'beloved' is loved by someone else; if you 'belittle' someone or their achievements, you cause them to be thought of as less important than they really are.

bi-

Claude Lebel emerged from the conference room dazed and bewildered.

*He was pleased still to be in Austria and close to his beloved wife.
I won't let you belittle yourself, it is the most important work anyone can do.*

...a soaked, bedraggled figure by the side of the road.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

becalmed	belie	bereaved	betrothed
bedraggled	belittle	besotted	bewildered
befuddled	beloved	betray	bewitched
beguile	bemused	betrothal	bewitching

3 Transitive verbs

be- occurs in a number of other transitive verbs. For example, if you 'befriend' someone, you help them and look after them as if they were your friend; to 'behold' something means to see or notice it; if soldiers 'besiege' a place, they surround it in an attempt to capture it.

For the first time he realized how much he owed to this man who had befriended him.

The city of Toulouse was besieged by the Crusaders.

The women were wringing their hands, weeping and bemoaning their fate.

I didn't begrudge him the food, since he was obviously starving.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

befriend	beleaguered	berate	besiege
begrudge	bemoan	beseech	bestow
behold	bequeath	beset	bewail

Words with other meanings:

become	begone	belay	beware
befall	behave	believe	
begin	beheaded	belong	

bi-

1 Two

bi- occurs in words which have 'two' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'bicycle' is a vehicle with two wheels; someone who is 'bilingual' can speak two languages fluently.

Mr Sutton came home from work on his bicycle.

bi-

Mina peered at Lewis through her bifocals.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bicarbonate	bifocals	bilingual	biplane
bicentenary	bigamy	binary	bisect
bicycle	bilateral	binoculars	

2 Twice

bi- can also be used to indicate that something happens twice during a particular period of time or once every two periods of time. For example, a 'biennial' event happens every two years.

*Every Union has its own annual or biennial conference.
...a bi-weekly magazine for teenage girls.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bi-annual	bi-annually	biennial	bi-monthly	bi-weekly
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bio-

bio- occurs in words which have 'life' or 'living things' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'biography' is a written account of someone's life; 'biology' is a science which describes and classifies living things.

Note that **bio-** sometimes occurs in the middle of words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

antibiotics	biochemistry	biologist	biosphere
autobiography	biodegradable	biology	biosystem
biochemical	biography	biopsy	symbiotic

-bound

1 Restrictions

-bound combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something as being restricted or limited by the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, someone who is 'housebound' cannot leave their home, perhaps because they are ill or very old; something that is 'culture-bound' is restricted by the culture in which it occurs.

*...the housebound housewife who never, ever goes out.
...home-bound women, desperate for extra cash or self-fulfilment.
...desk-bound Yale graduates who usually hadn't visited Europe.*

-bound

Young village men are beginning to doubt whether they are duty-bound to work on the land.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

class-bound	earthbound	housebound
culture-bound	fog-bound	snowbound
desk-bound	home-bound	tradition-bound
duty-bound	honour-bound	wheelchair-bound

Note that 'home-bound' also has another meaning. This is explained in paragraph 2 of this entry.

Some adjectives formed in this way describe something as being surrounded by a particular thing. Words formed in this way are fairly literary, and few of them occur frequently.

...the cold, shattered, mist-bound hills.

2 Direction

-bound combines with nouns that refer to places, or with adverbs and adjectives that express direction, to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something as travelling to that place or in that direction. For example, a 'southbound' train is heading towards the south; 'London-bound' passengers are travelling to London.

...the westbound passenger express.

...London-bound passengers.

...homeward-bound ships.

...treating city-bound migrants with contempt.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

earthbound	inbound	southbound
eastbound	London-bound	westbound
home-bound	northbound	
homeward-bound	outbound	

3 Coverings and books

-bound combines with some nouns to form adjectives which indicate the sort of covering that something has: these adjectives are mainly used to describe books. For example, a 'leather-bound' book has a leather cover.

Note that this use of **-bound** is related to the verb 'bind' and the noun 'binding'.

On the bedside table lay a red leather-bound copy of the Bible. He went over to his bookshelf and picked out a small, blue, cardboard-bound book.

-bound

Esther came in unsteadily, carrying four thick blue-bound volumes.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

brass-bound	cloth-bound	metal-bound
cardboard-bound	leather-bound	paper-bound

Words with other meanings

hidebound	muscle-bound	spellbound
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cardi-

cardi- occurs in words which have 'heart' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'cardiac' arrest is a heart attack; a 'cardiologist' is a doctor who deals with heart disease.

Note that **cardi-** sometimes occurs in the middle of words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cardiac	cardiologist
cardiograph	electrocardiogram

cent-

cent- occurs in words which indicate that something has a hundred parts. For example, a 'century' is a period of a hundred years; a 'percentage' is a fraction of a hundred.

Note that **cent-** sometimes occurs in the middle of words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bicentenary	centenary	centimetre	percent
bicentennial	centennial	centipede	percentage
centenarian	centigrade	century	

-centric

-centric occurs in adjectives which describe something as being centred on a particular thing or involving a particular thing. For example, if someone has an 'anthropocentric' outlook, they regard people as the most important thing in the universe; if something is 'heliocentric', it has the sun at its centre.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anthropocentric	egocentric	Eurocentric	heliocentric
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chron-

chron- occurs in words which have 'time' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'chronology' of a number of past events is the

co-

order in which they occurred; if two events are 'synchronized', they occur at the same time.

Note that **chron-** sometimes occurs in the middle of words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anachronism	chronicle	chronometer	synchronized
anachronistic	chronological	synchronic	
chronic	chronology	synchronize	

Note that 'chronic' has another meaning, and is used to describe a very bad or unpleasant situation.

-cide

-cide occurs in words which have 'killing' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'insecticide' is a chemical that kills insects; if someone commits 'suicide', they kill themselves.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

fratricide	herbicide	insecticide	pesticide	suicide
fungicide	homicide	parricide	regicide	
genocide	infanticide	patricide	spermicide	

cine-

cine- occurs in words which have 'motion pictures' or 'films' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'cinema' is a place where you go to watch films; a 'cine-camera' is a camera which takes moving pictures rather than still photographs.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cine-camera	cinema	cinematography
cine-film	cinematic	

circum-

circum- occurs in words which have 'around' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'circumference' of a circle, place, or round object is its edge or the line around it.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

circumcise	circumlocution	circumspect
circumference	circumnavigate	circumstantial
circumflex	circumscribe	circumvent

co-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **co-** combines with nouns to form new nouns which refer to people doing things together. **co-** can be used in this way

co-

with almost any noun which refers to a job, task, or status which two or more people can share. For example, the 'co-authors' of a book are the people who write it together; if you talk about the 'co-ownership' of a house, you are referring to the fact that it is owned by more than one person.

*...Dr John Baldwin, co-author of a detailed research project.
The Captain is responsible for flying the aircraft, while the co-pilot has to operate the radio.*

*...Mr Alastair Morton, the British co-chairman of Eurotunnel.
...her co-star, John Lithgoe, who played George.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

co-author	co-driver	co-membership	co-producer
co-chairman	co-founder	co-ownership	co-selector
co-defendant	co-leader	co-pilot	co-star
co-director	co-manager	co-presenter	

co- also combines with this meaning with verbs. For example, if two people 'co-direct' a film, they direct it together.

*Maurice Brown co-directed the production of Othello.
In Scotland and Wales red and grey squirrels coexist without problems.*

Britain and the Soviet Union already co-operate in the fight against drugs.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

co-direct	co-edit	coexist	co-operate	co-star
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Words with other meanings

co-educational	coincidence	co-ordinate
cohabit	co-opt	

col-, com-, con-

col-, com-, and con- occur in words which have 'together' or 'with' as part of their meaning. For example, your 'colleagues' are the people you work with, especially in professional jobs; if you 'combine' two or more things, you put them together to make one thing; if you 'connect' two things such as pipes or wires, you join them together.

*I talked to colleagues of yours recently.
The plants converge under the trees.*

contra-

She was a somewhat gruff companion on our expeditions.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

collaborate	commerce	comrade	consortium
collate	communal	concur	conspiracy
colleague	communication	condolences	contact
collect	community	confederation	contemporary
collide	companion	conference	converge
collocation	company	conjunction	
collude	compatible	connect	
combine	compound	consensus	

-conscious

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-conscious** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone who considers a particular aspect of their life or situation to be important, often when other people do not seem to notice it or to be interested in it. **-conscious** can be used in this way with almost any noun which describes something you might be interested in. For example, if someone is 'image-conscious', they are very interested in the way they appear to other people and are keen to create a particular impression; if someone is 'health-conscious', they are very concerned about their health and try to have a healthy lifestyle.

...an image-conscious Hollywood actor.

The country had long since had its hedgerows ripped away by cost-conscious farmers.

Ian was the most safety-conscious member of the team.

She is self-conscious about the weight she has put on since we last saw her.

The company plans to market the low-calorie sweetener in diet-conscious America.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

age-conscious	design-conscious	profit-conscious
budget-conscious	diet-conscious	race-conscious
camera-conscious	ecology-conscious	risk-conscious
cash-conscious	energy-conscious	safety-conscious
class-conscious	future-conscious	self-conscious
clock-conscious	health-conscious	status-conscious
colour-conscious	image-conscious	time-conscious
cost-conscious	media-conscious	trend-conscious

contra-

Contra- occurs in words which indicate that one thing opposes or has the opposite effect to another. For example, if you 'contradict'

contra-

someone, you say the opposite of what they have just said; a 'contraceptive' is a drug or device which prevents a woman from becoming pregnant.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

contraception
contraceptive

contradict
contradiction

contraflow
contraindication

contrary
contravene

counter-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **counter-** combines with nouns and verbs to form new nouns and verbs. Words formed in this way refer to or describe actions or activities that oppose another action or activity. For example, a 'counter-measure' is an action you take in order to weaken the effect of another action or situation; if one thing 'counteracts' another, it reduces its effect by doing something that produces the opposite effect.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

Unless specific counter-measures are taken, unemployment will continue to rise.

...political power counterbalances the other influences in society.

Rumours and counter-rumours will fly in all directions.

This could lead to a series of strikes and counterstrikes.

We hadn't expected them to counter-attack so soon.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

counter-accusation
counteract
counter-appeal
counterargument
counterattack
counterattraction
counterbalance
counter-bid
counterblow
countercharge

counter-claim
counter-espionage
counterexample
counterfire
counterforce
counter-irritant
counter-measure
counter-move
counter-offensive
counter-offer

counterplan
counter-plot
counter-proposal
counterreaction
counter-reform
counter-revolution
counter-strategy
counterstrike
counter-thrust
counterweight

Words with other meanings

counterfoil
counterpart

counterpoint
countersign

-craft

1 Vehicles

-craft combines with nouns and present participles to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to vehicles which move in a particular way or have a particular purpose. For example, an 'aircraft' is a vehicle that flies through the air, such as an aeroplane or glider; a 'landing-craft' is a small boat which is used to land troops on beaches.

Union members refused to handle baggage from the diverted aircraft.

The Voyager spacecraft will fly past Saturn in November.

...climbing down slippery ladders into the heaving beaching-craft.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aircraft	hovercraft	passengercraft	watercraft
beaching-craft	landing-craft	spacecraft	

2 Abilities and skills

-craft combines with nouns to form new nouns which refer to an activity or job that involves making or doing something skilfully. For example, 'handicrafts' are activities such as embroidery or pottery which involve creating things with your hands; 'stagecraft' is skill in the art of writing and staging plays.

Note that 'handicrafts' always occurs in the plural form.

...traditional Indian handicrafts industries.

...the American market leader in the supply of needlecraft kits.

Her father, who was skilled in woodcraft, had made the table for her.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bushcraft	housecraft	statecraft
filmcraft	needlecraft	witchcraft
handicrafts	stagecraft	woodcraft

cross-

1 Movement

PRODUCTIVE USE: **cross-** combines with nouns that refer to a place or area to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that moves across the place or area mentioned. For example, a 'cross-country' race takes place across fields and the open countryside instead of along roads or a running track; a 'cross-channel' ferry sails across the English Channel.

CROSS-

*He was in training for a cross-country run.
The cross-channel ferry problems should soon sort themselves out.
They exchanged cross-table chat with other diners.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

cross-border	cross-channel	cross-court	cross-harbour
cross-campus	cross-country	cross-frontier	cross-town

Note that **cross-** occasionally combines in this way with adjectives.

...a large cross-national survey.

2 Position or direction

cross- combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something that is positioned at, or that moves at, an angle to something else. For example, a 'crosswind' is a strong wind that blows across the direction that vehicles are travelling in; if someone is sitting 'cross-legged', they are sitting on the floor with their legs in the shape of a cross.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'crossroads' and 'crosswind', which are written as one word.

*These cars have poor stability on motorways in crosswinds.
The bird settled on a cross-beam near the top of the thatch.
A sudden cross-gust of cold air came heavy with the smell of pines.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cross-bar	cross-draught	cross-gust	crossroads
cross-beam	cross-flow	cross-legged	crosswind
cross-current	cross-grained	cross-piece	

3 More than one person or thing

cross- combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something that takes place between, or is relevant to, two or more people or things. For example, a 'cross-reference' is a note in one part of a book which tells the reader that there is relevant or more detailed information in another part of it; a 'cross-cultural' organization involves or deals with more than one culture.

*It contains many added entries and cross-references to help you find what you want.
...an influential cross-cultural study of housing policy.*

crypto-

The Government is dependent on cross-party support.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cross-breed	cross-indexed	cross-reference
cross-cultural	cross-party	cross-training

Words with other meanings

cross-bow	cross-eyed	cross-question	crossword
cross-check	crossfire	cross-section	
cross-examine	cross-purposes	cross-shape	

crypto-

crypto- combines with nouns to form words which describe the thing referred to by the original noun as being secret or concealed. It is often used to show that somebody is not being honest about their true beliefs or aims. For example, a 'crypto-fascist' is somebody who secretly believes in the principles of fascism but does not admit that they do; a 'crypto-coalition' is a coalition made in secret.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **crypto-** to nouns. However, words formed in this way are fairly formal and do not occur frequently.

The President fulfils a dual role—as a political leader and as crypto-monarch.

They thought that I was the sort of crypto-democrat who would try to overturn the government!

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

crypto-coalition	crypto-fascist	crypto-Trotskyist
crypto-communist	crypto-monarch	
crypto-democrat	crypto-republican	

Note that **crypto-** also occurs with this meaning in words formed from stems that are not current words in English. For example, 'cryptography' is the science of analysing and deciphering codes; a 'cryptogenic' disease is a disease whose origin is unknown or obscure.

...the science of code-making and code-breaking—cryptography.
CIA cryptonyms are used in place of true names.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cryptogenic	cryptography	cryptonym
cryptograph	cryptology	

-cy

-cy

1 A state or quality

-cy combines with adjectives, and occasionally nouns, to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state, quality, or experience described by the adjective. For example, 'pregnancy' is the state of being pregnant; 'accuracy' is the ability to perform a task accurately without making a mistake.

Spelling: A final 't' or 'te' is replaced by -cy.

She lay on the bed, sick from her first pregnancy.

The President restored dignity and decency.

Cramped homes prevent privacy.

There was no hesitancy in his words.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accuracy	despondency	inadequacy	obstinacy
ascendancy	diplomacy	inconsistency	poignancy
buoyancy	discrepancy	inefficiency	potency
complacency	efficiency	infancy	pregnancy
consistency	expectancy	insufficiency	privacy
decency	fluency	intimacy	proficiency
deficiency	frequency	irrelevancy	redundancy
delicacy	hesitancy	legitimacy	secrecy
delinquency	illiteracy	literacy	transparency
dependency	immediacy	militancy	urgency

2 Rank, position or occupation

-cy combines with nouns that refer to people with a particular rank, position, or occupation in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer directly to that rank, position, or occupation. For example, a 'baronetcy' is the rank or position of a baronet; 'accountancy' is the theory and practice of being an accountant.

Spelling: A final 't' or 'te' is replaced by -cy with the exception of 'baronetcy' and 'viscounty', where the 't' is retained.

He succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his father.

France takes over the EC presidency from Spain in the second half of this year.

David Gower took on the England cricket captaincy again.

He had not rejected the idea of candidacy in the coming elections.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accountancy	candidacy	consultancy	presidency
advocacy	captaincy	magistracy	regency
baronetcy	chaplaincy	occupancy	tenancy
bureaucracy	chieftaincy	piracy	viscounty

Words with other meanings

agency	contingency	fancy	primacy
confederacy	currency	legacy	procuracy
conservancy	efficacy	mercy	prophecy
conspiracy	emergency	pharmacy	tendency
constituency	fallacy	policy	

de-

1 The opposite action

PRODUCTIVE USE: **de-** combines with verbs to form new verbs. Verbs formed in this way describe an action which has the opposite effect of, or reverses, the process described by the original verb. For example, if an organization is 'deregulated', the rules and regulations which control how it operates are removed; if something 'dehumanizes' people, it takes away from them the qualities that make them human.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

...measures to deregulate the television industry.

Word processors are likely to depersonalize working relationships.

Accommodation would have to be decontaminated after exposure to radiation.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

deactivate	decompression	dehumanize	demystify
decentralize	decongestion	dehydrate	denaturalize
decertify	decontaminate	deindustrialize	depersonalize
declassify	decouple	dematerialize	depoliticize
decolonize	de-emphasize	demilitarize	deregulate
decommission	de-escalate	demobilize	destabilize

Note that a number of verbs combine with 'dis-' rather than **de-** to describe an action which reverses a process.

For more information on prefixes with a negative meaning, see **dis-**, **il-**, **non-**, and **un-**.

2 The removal of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **de-** combines with nouns to form verbs which indicate that the thing referred to by the noun is removed. For example, if you 'de-ice' the windows of your car, you remove all the ice from them.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

de-

*De-icing the aircraft delayed departures.
You should defrost your fridge once a fortnight.
...the de-inking of waste paper for recycling.
Descal your kettle for faster boiling.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

debristle	de-curtain	de-gut	de-ink	descal
debug	de-feather	dehouse	delouse	de-skill
decake	defrost	de-ice	de-mist	

Words with other meanings

debase	deface	degenerate	demoralize	deserve
decease	defile	degrade	denote	design
decipher	deform	delay	depart	despite
declaim	defraud	delegate	depress	detest
decrease	defray	delight	derail	devalue
decry	defuse	delimit	derange	devote

deca-

deca- occurs in words which have 'ten' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'decade' is a period of ten years; a 'decathlon' is a sporting competition in which each athlete takes part in ten different events.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

decade	decahedron	decametre
decagon	decalitre	decathlon

deci-

deci- occurs in words which have 'tenth' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'decimal' system involves counting in units of ten.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

decibel	decilitre	decimal	decimetre
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demi-

demi- occurs in words which have 'half' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'demi-god' is a mythological being which is part mortal and part god.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

demi-devil	demi-god	demi-world
------------	----------	------------

For more information on prefixes which mean 'half', see **half-** and **semi-**.

dis-

derm-

derm- occurs in words which have 'skin' as part of their meaning. For example, 'dermatitis' is an inflammation of the skin.

Note that **derm-** sometimes also occurs in the middle of words. For example, your 'epidermis' is the thin protective outer layer of your skin.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

dermal	dermatologist	dermis
dermatitis	dermatology	epidermis

dia-

dia- occurs in words which have 'through', 'across', or 'between' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'diachronic' study shows the development of something through time; a 'dialogue' is a conversation between two or more people.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

diagonal	dialogue	diaphanous
dialectic	diameter	diaphragm

dis-

1 The opposite action

dis- combines with verbs to form new verbs. Verbs formed in this way describe an action that has the opposite effect of, or reverses, the process described by the original verb. For example, if you 'disobey' someone, you do not do what they tell you to; if you 'disapprove' of something, you do not like or approve of it.

In all these years I've never known you to disobey an order.

The boy disappeared from the hotel during the night.

Mr Binford disapproves of kids using beach houses for holidays.

The farmer was riding a mule and was about to dismount.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

disagree	discontinue	disinherit	displace
disallow	discredit	disintegrate	displease
disappear	disembark	disinvest	dispossess
disapprove	disenfranchise	dislike	disprove
disarm	disengage	dislodge	disqualify
disassociate	disentangle	dismount	dissatisfy
disband	dishearten	disobey	distrust
disbelieve	disincline	disorganize	disunite
disconnect	disinfect	disown	disuse

dis-

Note that **dis-** also combines with this meaning with nouns formed from the verbs listed above.

*There was little disagreement over what needed to be done.
Thomas had been feeling a little dissatisfaction with his daughters.*

Note that a number of verbs combine with 'de-' rather than **dis-** to describe an action which reverses a process. See the entry for **de-**.

2 Opposite states, attitudes, or qualities

dis- combines with adjectives and nouns to form new adjectives and nouns. Words formed in this way describe a state, characteristic, or quality which is the opposite of the one referred to or described by the original noun or adjective. For example, a 'dishonest' person is someone who is not truthful, honest, or able to be trusted; a 'disadvantage' is something in someone's character or situation which causes them problems or difficulties.

The hard-working carpenter had never done a dishonest thing in his life.

...vast and disorderly assemblies of soldiers.

Her letter caused him some discomfort.

I stared at Judith in disbelief, but I could see she meant what she said.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

disadvantage	disfavour	disinterested	disproportionate
disbelief	disharmony	disloyal	disreputable
discomfort	dishonest	disobedience	disrepute
discontent	dishonour	disobliging	disrespect
discourteous	disincentive	disorder	disservice
discourtesy	disingenuous	disorderly	dissimilar

For more information on prefixes with a negative meaning, see **de-**, **il-**, **non-**, and **un-**.

Words with other meanings

disappoint	discourage	disillusion	display
disarray	discourse	disintegrate	disquiet
discharge	discover	disjointed	disregard
disclaim	disease	dislocate	disrepair
disclose	disembodied	dislodge	dissolve
discolour	disfigure	dismiss	distaste
disconcert	disgrace	disparity	
discount	dishearten	displace	

-dom

1 A state or condition

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-dom** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the experience of whatever is indicated by the original nouns and adjectives. For example, 'freedom' is the state of being free; 'stardom' is the state or experience of being a star or celebrity.

Spelling: The noun formed from 'wise' is 'wisdom'.

*In the world of today political freedom is still rare.
...the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of society.
He had had long experience of outwitting officialdom.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

boredom	earldom	hippiedom	princedom
chiefdom	freedom	martyrdom	stardom
dukedom	gangsterdom	officialdom	wisdom

Note that 'dukedom', 'earldom' and 'princedom' all have two meanings and are included in both sections of this entry.

2 A realm or territory

-dom also combines with titles or names to refer to the land that someone controls. For example, a 'kingdom' is the land or country that a king rules over; 'Christendom' is an old-fashioned word that refers to the countries and peoples that are Christian and follow Christ's teachings.

*The kingdom had shrunk, it had been reduced to a handful of villages.
...a princedom by the sea.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Christendom	earldom	princedom
dukedom	kingdom	

double-

1 Two

PRODUCTIVE USE: **double-** combines with nouns, adjectives, and verbs to form words which indicate that there are two of something or that something happens twice. For example, a 'double-decker' bus has two decks or levels; if you 'double-check' something, you check it for a second time to make sure it is correct or safe.

double-

*He was the best double-decker driver in Stroud.
...a double-edged rake of heavy gauge metal.
The first issue had a double-page spread.
...a double-barrelled shotgun.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

double-action	double-doors	double-locked	double-sided
double-barrelled	double-edged	double-page	double-strength
double-breasted	double-glazed	double-parked	
double-check	double-handed	double-pronged	
double-decker	double-length	double-seamed	

2 Deception

Double- combines with a small number of verbs and nouns to form new verbs and nouns which express the idea that one person is deceiving another. For example, if someone 'double-crosses' you, they cheat you by pretending that they are doing what you had planned or agreed together, when in fact they are doing something else; 'double-talk' is speech or writing which has two possible meanings and which is meant to be confusing.

*You want me to double-cross the man I work for?
...double-dealing, innuendo and character assassination.
...bureaucratic double-talk.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

double-cross	double-deal	double-dealing	double-talk
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Words with other meanings

double-act	double-bill	double-jointed	double-time
double-bed	double-dutch	double-take	

down-

1 Direction or position

down- combines with nouns and verbs to form words which describe someone or something as moving towards, or being situated in, a lower place or position. For example, if you go 'downhill', you move down a slope or hill towards a lower place; if your eyes are 'downcast', they are looking towards the ground.

*The car lurched forward and began to speed downhill.
They were steering downriver towards the open water of the Broads.*

-down

I am paralysed from the armpits downwards.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

down-draught	downstage	downswing	downwind
downhill	downstairs	downward	
downriver	downstream	downwards	

2 Becoming worse

down- combines with nouns and verbs to form new nouns and verbs. Words formed in this way indicate that something has become worse than it was previously. For example, when the economy of a country suffers a 'downturn', it becomes less efficient; someone's 'downfall' is their failure or ruin.

The company blamed its downturn on interest rates.

These strikes brought about the downfall of the country's leader.

We are downgrading the quality of our lives.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

downfall	downgrade	downplay	downtrend	downturn
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Words with other meanings

downbeat	downmarket	downpour	downside
downcast	down-payment	downright	downtown

-down

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-down** combines with nouns which refer to parts of the body in order to form adverbs which describe the position in which something is done. For example, if somebody walks 'head-down', they have their head lowered; if you place your hand on something 'palm-down', you touch it with the palm of your hand.

The pussmoth caterpillar browses head-down on leaves.

I brought my right hand flattened and palm-down against the side of my neck.

I watched while a plane flew nose-down and released its load against the base of a hill.

A hundred little boats lie belly-down on the shore.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

belly-down	head-down	palm-down
face-down	nose-down	top-down

Words with other meanings

breakdown	eiderdown	sundown	tumbledown
crackdown	showdown	thumbs-down	
dressing-down	splashdown	touchdown	

dys-

dys-

dys- occurs in words which have 'abnormal', 'diseased', or 'unpleasant' as part of their meaning. For example, if someone has 'dysentery' they have an infection in their intestines; 'dyslexia' is an abnormal brain condition which causes difficulty in reading.

Note that these words are formal and usually medical.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

dysentery dysfunction dyslexia dyspepsia dystrophy

eco-

eco- occurs in words which refer to or describe things that are connected with the environment in which plants, animals, and people live. For example, 'ecology' is the study of the relationships between plants, animals, people, and their environment; the 'ecosystem' of a place is the relationship between plants, animals, and their environment.

The clearing of the jungle is threatening the delicate ecology of the rainforests.

Forest fires are an additional danger where the ecosystem is particularly fragile.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

ecologist ecology ecosphere ecosystem

PRODUCTIVE USE: **eco-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way indicate that the person or thing mentioned by the original noun or adjective is connected with the environment.

Note that words formed in this way are fairly uncommon and usually occur in newspapers or magazines.

Man is moving into a totally new stage of eco-technological development.

When natural controls are removed, population explosions and eco-disasters can occur.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

eco-catastrophe eco-doom eco-philosopher
eco-disaster eco-freak eco-technological

Words with other meanings:

economic economical economics economize economy

-ectomy

-ectomy occurs in medical words which refer to the surgical removal of a part of the body. For example, a 'tonsillectomy' is a surgical operation to have your tonsils removed; a 'hysterectomy' is a surgical operation to remove a woman's womb.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

appendectomy	mastectomy	tonsillectomy
hysterectomy	splenectomy	vasectomy

-ed

1 Past tense and past participles

-ed combines with the base forms of verbs to form the past tense and past participles.

One of the men talked about getting married.
We have waited too long for our freedom.

2 Past participles used as adjectives

The past participles of transitive verbs are often used as adjectives indicating that something has been affected in some way.

...strips of cooked meat.
...hordes of excited children.
I got bored at the farm in Devon.

The past participles of a few intransitive verbs are used as adjectives indicating that a person or thing has done something. For example, a 'retired' person is someone who has retired.

The escaped convict was hiding in the loft.
...a retired police officer.
Electrical fittings should be removed by a qualified electrician.

-ed also combines with nouns to form adjectives which describe someone or something as having a particular feature.

...a bearded old man.
...intricately patterned bead necklaces.
...a three-mile stretch of heavily wooded, hilly countryside.

3 Forming compound adjectives

Some past participles ending in **-ed** combine with other words to form compound adjectives.

...his face was pear-shaped.

-ed

...a maroon-coloured car.

She is blonde, blue-eyed, and just under six feet tall.

Note that there are a number of adjectives ending in **-ed** that are formed from stems which are not current words in English.

...the clatter of the antiquated air-conditioning machine.

We are, most of us, doomed to unhappiness.

The parched soil soaked up the rain.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

antiquated	beloved	doomed	sophisticated
ashamed	concerted	indebted	tinned
assorted	crazed	parched	
belated	deceased	rugged	

For more information about the past participle of verbs, see the Collins Cobuild English Grammar.

-ee

1 Someone who is affected by an action

-ee combines with transitive verbs which describe actions to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the person that the action is being done to. For example, an 'employee' is someone who is employed by a firm; a 'trainee' is someone who is being trained to do a particular job.

Conflict arose between employer and employee.

...the year's nominee for the exchange scheme.

...various appointees to lesser posts.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

addressee	deportee	examinee	licensee	trainee
amputee	detainee	franchisee	mortgagee	transferee
appointee	employee	internee	nominee	trustee
assignee	evacuee	interviewee	payee	

2 Someone who performs an action

-ee combines with some verbs to form nouns which refer to someone who has performed a particular action. For example, an 'escapee' is someone who has escaped from captivity; a 'devotee' of a subject or an activity is someone who is very enthusiastic about it.

Road blocks by police and prison staff ensured that no escapee would get through.

...absentees from school.

em-, en-

...a Church of England measure which would allow divorcees to be ordained.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

absentee	devotee	escapee	returnee
cohabitee	divorcee	retiree	

Words with other meanings

matinee	puree	refugee	soiree
negligee	referee	repartee	toupee

electro-

electro- occurs in words which have 'electric' as part of their meaning. For example, if you are 'electrocuted' you are accidentally killed or badly injured by touching something that is connected to a source of electricity; 'electromagnetic' effects are caused by electrical and magnetic forces.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

electrocardiograph	electrode	electromagnetic
electrochemistry	electrolysis	electronic
electrocute	electrolyte	electro-nuclear
electrocution	electromagnet	electroplating

em-, en-

em- and **en-** occur in verbs that describe the process of moving into or being placed into a different state or condition, or being placed in a different position. For example, if something 'enables' you to do something, it gives you an opportunity so that you become able to do it; if you 'enrich' something, you improve its quality or value by adding something else to it; if someone is 'entombed', they are buried underground.

Spelling: **em-** combines with words beginning with 'b', 'm', or 'p';
en- combines with words beginning with other letters.

*She moved her head to enable her to speak more clearly.
He nodded his head and smiled to encourage her.*

em-, en-

He was emboldened by his success.

The security of the country was not endangered.

We embarked on the MacLeods' boat.

She imagined herself enfolding him in her arms.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

embark	encase	enfeeble	ennoble	entangle
embed	encircle	enfold	enrage	enthrone
embitter	enclose	enforce	enrapture	entomb
embody	encode	enfranchise	enrich	entrance
embolden	encourage	engulf	enshrine	entrap
empower	encrust	enlarge	enshroud	entrench
enable	endanger	enliven	enslave	entwine
encamp	endear	enmesh	ensnare	

Words with other meanings

embalm	enchant	engrain	enlighten	entitle
embark	encompass	engrave	enlist	entreat
embattled	encounter	engross	ensue	entrust
embrace	engender	enjoin	ensure	
enact	engorge	enjoy	entail	

-en

1 Changing the quality or state of something

-en combines with nouns and adjectives that refer to or describe a quality or state in order to form verbs. Verbs formed in this way describe the process of causing something to have a particular quality or to be in a particular state. For example, if a fire 'blackens' a wall, the flames make the wall turn black; if rain 'moistens' the ground, it makes it moist.

...a small patch of ground, blackened by the ashes of old camp fires.
The lacquer dries very quickly and hardens in an hour.
...fruit juice sweetened with sugar.

Verbs formed in this way can also be used to express the idea that someone or something has more of a quality than it had previously. For example, if a river 'deepens', it becomes deeper than it was before; if your hair is 'lightened' by the sun, it becomes lighter than it usually is.

She laughed, and that seemed to deepen her voice.

-ence

*She was trying on a blue **suede** jacket and wondering if she could have the sleeves shortened.*

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

blacken	fatten	loosen	slacken	weaken
brighten	flatten	moisten	stiffen	whiten
broaden	freshen	quicken	straighten	widen
cheapen	harden	quieten	strengthen	worsen
dampen	heighten	redde	sweeten	
darken	lengthen	sharpen	thicken	
deafen	lessen	shorten	tighten	
deepen	lighten	sicken	toughen	

2 Indicating what something is made of or resembles

-en combines with nouns to form adjectives which describe something that is made from or resembles the substance referred to by the original noun. For example, a 'woollen' jumper is made of wool; if something is 'silken', it is smooth, soft and luxurious, like silk.

*People here wear woollen **clothing** even on hot days.
The traditional breakfast of **porridge** was cooked in earthen pots over a fire built among three rocks.
...a rosy, frail girl with bright golden hair.*

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

ashen	golden	silken	woollen
earthen	leaden	waxen	
flaxen	oaken	wooden	

Words with other meanings

dead	enlighten	enliven	hasten	hearten
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-ence

-ence combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the action, process, or state described by the original verbs. For example, 'insistence' is the act of insisting on something.

*...her **insistence** on staying in the best hotel.
Brian fought off alcoholism and **dependence** on painkilling drugs.
...the scientist revealed the **existence** of a 'hole' in the ozone layer.*

-ence

There was growing concern about the increasing occurrence of food poisoning.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

adherence	existence	pretence	subsidence
coherence	indulgence	recurrence	subsistence
correspondence	insistence	reference	transcendence
defence	interference	reminiscence	transference
dependence	occurrence	residence	
divergence	persistence	resurgence	
emergence	preference	reverence	

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ence** also combines with adjectives ending in 'ent' in order to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or quality described by the original adjectives. For example, 'obedience' is the state of being obedient.

Spelling: A final 'ent' is replaced by **-ence**.

With dreary obedience the choir raised their hands.

Working in a group gives you a bit more confidence, because everyone is in the same position.

The accident was caused solely by the negligence of another motorist.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

absence	convenience	eminence	obedience
adolescence	decadence	impotence	patience
affluence	diffidence	indifference	presence
benevolence	diligence	innocence	prominence
competence	disobedience	insolence	reticence
confidence	eloquence	intelligence	violence

Words with other meanings

ambience	continence	influence	quintessence
audience	credence	jurisprudence	science
cadence	essence	licence	sentence
circumference	evidence	offence	sequence
coincidence	experience	pestilence	silence
conference	incidence	prescience	valence
conscience	inexperience	providence	

-ent

-ent combines with verbs to form adjectives and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to a person or thing that performs the action or that experiences the process described by the original verb. For example, if one thing is 'different' from another, it differs from it; a 'student' is someone who studies something.

The new house was not much different from the old one.

-er

*Gradually the children became less dependent on their parents.
A woman holds out her hand for money, importunate, insistent,
desperate.
...a farm-worker and day-release student at the Agricultural
Training Centre.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

absorbent	dependent	insistent	student
ascendent	different	persistent	superintendent
correspondent	existent	respondent	transcendent

Words with other meanings

accent	consistent	intent	patent
assent	content	lament	potent
cogent	extent	moment	stringent
consent	fluent	parent	tangent

equi-

equi- occurs in words which have 'equal' or 'equally' as part of their meaning. For example, a place that is 'equidistant' from two other places is exactly the same distance from both of them; two things that are 'equivalent' have the same use, size, or value as each other.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

equidistant	equilibrium	equivocal
equilateral	equivalent	equivocate

-er

1 Forming comparative adjectives

-er combines with qualitative adjectives to form comparative adjectives. Comparative adjectives describe someone or something as having more of a particular characteristic or quality than someone or something else. For example, if you are 'older' than someone else, you have been alive longer than they have; if one person is 'sillier' than another, their behaviour is more foolish.

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-er** combines with this meaning with adjectives of one syllable.

Spelling: A final 'd', 'b', 'g', 't', or 'n' preceded by a single vowel is doubled before adding **-er**. A final 'e' is replaced by **-er**.

*Andrea was two years older than me.
Does she look bigger and fatter to you?*

-er

I have cousins only just ten years younger than myself.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning formed from adjectives of one syllable:

bigger	fatter	longer	safer	thinner
brighter	fuller	louder	slower	tougher
colder	larger	newer	smaller	wetter
darker	later	older	softer	younger
deeper	lighter	sadder	thicker	

Note that the comparative form of 'good' is 'better', and the comparative form of 'bad' is 'worse'.

-er also combines with this meaning with some adjectives of two syllables.

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'i' before adding **-er**. A final 'e' is replaced by **-er**.

*Two hours earlier I had made the acquaintance of the hall porter.
I'm definitely happier than I was years ago.
You're much cleverer than she is.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning formed from adjectives of two syllables:

angrier	funnier	lovelier	politer	steadier
busier	gentler	luckier	prettier	stupider
cleverer	handsomer	maturer	remoter	tinier
dirtier	happier	narrower	shallower	
earlier	heavier	obscurer	sillier	
friendlier	likelier	pleasanter	simpler	

-er sometimes combines with this meaning with colour adjectives.

*His face was redder than usual and he seemed embarrassed.
The clouds were whiter yesterday than they are today.*

2 Occupation or pastime

-er combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to people who do the action described by the original verb, usually because it is their job. For example, a 'baker' is someone who bakes and sells bread and cakes; the 'leader' of a group of people or organization is the person who leads it or who is in charge of it.

*He sometimes helped Mr Mueller in the kitchen as a cook and baker.
The driver went back and started the bus.
I went to London and tried to earn my living as a portrait painter.*

-ery

She was a student teacher, spending a year in a school in Cambridge.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

baker	lecturer	producer	teacher
commander	manager	reader	waiter
driver	observer	reporter	walker
employer	painter	rider	winner
farmer	photographer	runner	worker
leader	player	speaker	writer

-er also combines with verbs to form nouns that refer to things rather than people. For example, a 'computer' is an electronic machine that can perform computations and that stores and retrieves information.

*The entire operation is done by computer.
Have you seen my electric food mixer?*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

blender	digger	holder	recorder	slicer
computer	duster	mixer	roller	strainer
cooker	grinder	mower	sander	strainer
cutter	hanger	printer	scraper	wiper

Note that a number of nouns formed from verbs and with this meaning end in **-or** rather than **-er**.

For more information see **-or**.

-ery

1 Actions

-ery combines with some verbs to form nouns which refer to an action. For example, when someone makes a 'discovery,' they find out or discover something that they did not previously know; if someone makes a 'delivery,' they deliver something.

Spelling: A final 'e' or 'er' is replaced by **-ery**.

Two British researchers have made a discovery about 'computer viruses'.

...everyone there was arrested on charges of armed robbery.

...a persistent campaign of mockery by the satirical fortnightly magazine Private Eye.

-ery

The cheque might have been a forgery.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bribery	debauchery	embroidery	mockery
butchery	delivery	flattery	recovery
cajolery	discovery	forgery	robbery
cookery	drudgery	lechery	trickery

2 Behaviour

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ery** combines with adjectives which describe a type of behaviour, or with nouns which refer to a person who behaves in that way, in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to that type of behaviour. For example, 'savagery' is the violent cruelty associated with savages; 'foolery' is foolish behaviour.

Note that many of these words are old-fashioned and are not used very often.

Dan went for him with sudden savagery.

'What is the purpose of this foolery?'

...the prudery of the Victorians.

...an incident of unpardonable brutality and thuggery.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bravery	knavery	savagery	tomfoolery
buffoonery	prudery	snobbery	
foolery	roguery	thuggery	

3 Places

-ery combines with verbs or nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a place where something is done or kept. For example, a 'bakery' is a place where bread and cakes are baked; a 'piggery' is a building where pigs are kept.

I met her at the bakery where we were both buying brownies.

...a shrubbery of lilac bushes and evergreens.

Five gallons of milk a day went to the Stowmarket Creamery.

...a fish hatchery in Idaho.

...a two-hundred acre vineyard and a well established winery.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bakery	creamery	nunnery	refinery
brewery	distillery	nursery	shrubbery
cannery	fishery	orangery	tannery
colliery	gunnery	piggery	winery

4 Groups

A number of words ending in **-ery** refer to a group or collection of objects of a particular kind. For example, 'jewellery' refers to ornaments you wear on your body, such as rings and bracelets; 'pottery' refers to pots, dishes, and other articles made of clay.

They were all fond of jewellery, and some wore rings and some fine gold chains.

There was no electricity, the machinery had failed again.

...the brilliance of two huge crimson flower vases spilling with blossoms and greenery.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

artillery	finery	ironmongery	pottery
crockery	greenery	jewellery	scenery
drapery	imagery	machinery	

Words with other meanings

adultery	cemetery	hosiery	misery	stationery
archery	cutlery	joinery	monastery	surgery
artery	effrontery	livery	mystery	treachery
battery	gallery	lottery	slavery	upholstery
celery	grocery	mastery	sorcery	

-ese

1 Origin

-ese combines with the names of places to form words which describe someone or something as being from the place mentioned. For example, a 'Chinese' person comes from China; the 'Viennese' Opera is based in Vienna; the 'Maltese' refers to all the people who come from Malta.

He was a Chinese businessman.

...classical Balinese dance movements.

Her father was Portuguese.

She arranged to deliver a petition to the Japanese.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Balinese	Japanese	Maltese	Portuguese	Taiwanese
Burmese	Javanese	Milanese	Senegalese	Viennese
Chinese	Lebanese	Nepalese	Sudanese	Vietnamese

2 Languages

-ese combines with nouns which refer to countries in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the language spoken

-ese

in that country. For example, 'Japanese' is the language spoken in Japan; 'Portuguese' is the language spoken in Portugal.

Mr Takahashi was speaking in animated Japanese.
When they saw us they rushed forward, chanting in Chinese.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Burmese	Japanese	Maltese	Vietnamese
Chinese	Javanese	Portuguese	

PRODUCTIVE USE: -ese combines in this way with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to an unattractive or confusing way of speaking or writing that is typical of the person or place mentioned. For example 'journalese' refers to the way in which journalists speak and write; 'Brooklynese' is the accent and dialect spoken by people from Brooklyn.

'Torturous' is now common journalese.
...a classic phrase of diplomatic officialese.
He was already speaking Americanese.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Americanese	Brooklynese	journalese	officialese
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-esque

PRODUCTIVE USE: -esque combines with names of famous people, for example writers, composers, or painters, in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something that is similar in style to something made or done by the person mentioned. For example, if a piece of music is 'Haydnesque', it is similar in style to music by the composer Haydn; if a play is 'Pinteresque', it is similar in style to plays written by Harold Pinter.

The orchestra's performance was perfectly Haydnesque.
He loved being the centre of attraction and dropped easily into Tarzanesque poses.
...this Chaplinesque incident roused the household.
...an extraordinary Rembrandtesque painting by Murillo.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Beethovenesque	Haydnesque	Rembrandtesque
Chaplinesque	Hoffmanesque	Tarzanesque
Dantesque	Pinteresque	

-est

-ess

-ess combines with nouns that refer to a person or animal in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a woman or a female animal. For example, a 'princess' is a woman who has a rank equal to a prince, or who is married to a prince; a 'lioness' is a female lion.

*...the king's younger daughter, the Princess Elizabeth.
A lion and lioness leapt over the walls of a cattle pen.
Thynne's bride was the richest heiress in England.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

actress	empress	lioness	priestess	viscountess
authoress	goddess	manageress	princess	waitress
countess	heiress	mistress	stewardess	
duchess	hostess	pantheress	tigress	

Note that many people do not like to use words ending in **-ess** to refer to women, and prefer to use a noun which can refer to both men and women. For example, a female writer is more likely to be referred to as an 'author' than as an 'authoress'.

For more information on nouns that refer specifically to women, see **-woman**.

-est

-est combines with qualitative adjectives to form superlative adjectives. Superlative adjectives describe someone or something as having more of the quality mentioned than anything else of its kind. For example, if a building is the 'tallest' in the world, there is no other building as tall as that one; if a boy is described as the 'cleverest' in his class, there is no one in his class as clever as him.

Note that superlative adjectives are nearly always preceded by 'the'.

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-est** combines with this meaning with adjectives of one syllable.

Spelling: A final 'g', 't', or 'n' preceded by a single vowel is doubled before adding **-est**. A final 'e' is replaced by **-est**.

*The Maharajah was the tallest man she knew.
The loudest applause went to John Faddis.
When we got inside the cemetery we stopped. It was the biggest one we had ever seen.
There are three types of ant-eater. The smallest lives entirely in trees.*

-est

Here are some examples of words with this meaning formed from adjectives of one syllable:

biggest	fattest	longest	slowest	thinnest
brightest	fullest	loudest	smallest	toughest
coldest	largest	newest	softest	wettest
darkest	latest	oldest	tallest	youngest
deepest	lightest	saddest	thickest	

Note that the superlative form of 'good' is 'best', and the superlative form of 'bad' is 'worst'.

-est also combines with this meaning with some adjectives of two syllables.

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'i' before adding **-est**. A final 'e' is replaced by **-est**.

Here is a list of words with this meaning formed from adjectives of two syllables:

angriest	funniest	likeliest	pleasantest	simplest
busiest	gentlest	loveliest	politest	steadiest
commonest	handsomest	luckiest	prettiest	stupidest
dirtiest	happiest	matuarest	remotest	tiniest
easiest	heaviest	narrowest	shallowest	
friendliest	likeliest	obscurest	silliest	

-est sometimes combines with this meaning with colour adjectives.

...driving a shining new car through some of the greenest scenery in America.

...the reddest shooting star they had ever seen.

Euro-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **Euro-** combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something that is connected with Europe or the European Community (EC) in some way. For example, a 'Euro-election' is held to elect the members of the European Parliament; a 'Eurocheque' is a cheque you can use in any country in Europe.

Note that words formed in this way usually occur in newspapers or in broadcast reports of news.

Spelling: **Euro-** is always written with a capital letter. Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...a bitterly contested Euro-election campaign.

Euro-MPs have been banned from flying first class on foreign trips.

...burgundy-coloured Euro-passports.

...a London-based Euro-bank.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Euro-bank	Euro-constituency	Euro-passport
Eurobond	Euro-currency	Euro-policy
Euro-campaign	Euro-election	Euro-socialism
Euro-candidate	Euromoney	Euro-summit
Eurocheque	Euro-MP	
Euro-communism	Europarliament	

Euro- occasionally combines with adjectives such as 'African' or 'Chinese' to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe an organization or activity that involves Europe and the continent or nation mentioned.

...Euro-American political domination.

...a Euro-African tennis match.

ever-

1 Always

PRODUCTIVE USE: **ever-** combines with present participles and adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that continually performs the action mentioned, or that always has the characteristics or qualities mentioned. For example, when the amount of something is 'ever-increasing', it is always increasing; if something such as food is 'ever-available', it is always available and therefore easy to obtain.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'everlasting', which is written as one word.

...the ever-increasing demand for energy.

...ever-available supplies of consumer goods.

...the everlasting snows of the mighty Himalayas.

...the ever-present threat of physical danger.

I could hear nothing but the sound of ever-moving water.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ever-available	ever-helpful	ever-present
ever-changing	ever-increasing	ever-rising
ever-decreasing	everlasting	ever-shrinking
ever-diminishing	ever-lengthening	ever-smiling
ever-efficient	ever-moving	ever-watchful
ever-expanding	ever-narrowing	ever-widening
ever-faithful	ever-open	ever-willing
ever-growing	ever-popular	ever-worsening

ever-

2 Increasingly

PRODUCTIVE USE: **ever-** combines with the comparative form of adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something that has an increasing amount of the characteristic or quality described by the original adjective. For example, if you describe someone as 'ever-bolder', you mean that you think that they are becoming more and more bold; if something is becoming 'ever-smaller', it is continually getting smaller.

Thelma encouraged me to ask ever-bolder questions.

I focused in on an ever-smaller segment of the slide.

Men will build homes in ever-stranger places.

...the ever-colder nights.

The sides closed in, towering above us with an ever-closer proximity.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ever-bolder
ever-briefer
ever-closer
ever-colder

ever-faster
ever-fiercer
ever-greater
ever-higher

ever-larger
ever-narrower
ever-scarcer
ever-shorter

ever-smaller
ever-stranger
ever-stronger
ever-wider

Words with other meanings

evergreen

evermore

ex-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **ex-** combines with nouns that refer to people in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone who used to be the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, the 'ex-president' of a country used to be its president; an 'ex-policeman' is someone who used to work as a policeman.

...Jose Luis Bustamante, ex-president of Peru.

...Gaylord Koffritz, Renata's ex-husband.

...first-hand accounts of ex-inmates of mental hospitals.

Ex-lovers rarely meet again or even write.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ex-accountant
ex-boxer
ex-chairman
ex-communist
ex-convict
ex-dictator

ex-employer
ex-friend
ex-husband
ex-inmate
ex-journalist
ex-lover

ex-minister
ex-policeman
ex-president
ex-prisoner
ex-professor
ex-pupil

ex-secretary
ex-soldier
ex-tenant
ex-wife

extra-

1 Very

PRODUCTIVE USE: **extra-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as having a large amount of the quality or characteristic described by the original adjective. For example, if you describe something as 'extra-special', you mean that you think that it is very special; if something is 'extra-large', it is very large.

'A spectacular goal, extra-special,' the West Ham manager enthused.

...an extra-strong rope for towing vehicles.

...the extra-bright child.

...a special edition of the book on extra-thin paper.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

extra-bright	extra-large	extra-small	extra-strong
extra-fine	extra-long	extra-smooth	extra-thin
extra-firm	extra-low	extra-soft	
extra-hard	extra-short	extra-solid	
extra-hot	extra-slow	extra-special	

2 Outside

extra- also combines with adjectives to form new adjectives that describe something as being outside, beyond, or different from what was described by the original adjective. For example, 'extra-curricular' activities are those you do outside the normal curriculum or timetable in schools or colleges; anything described as 'extra-terrestrial' comes from beyond the planet.

Many students benefit greatly from involvement in extra-curricular activities.

I have an open mind on the subject of so-called telepathy and extra-sensory perception.

Before the nineteenth century, the extra-European world supplied Europe with luxuries.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

extra-curricular	extra-mural	extra-terrestrial
extra-European	extra-parliamentary	extra-territorial
extra-marital	extra-sensory	

-first

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-first** combines with nouns which refer to parts of the body in order to form adverbs. Adverbs formed in this way

-first

indicate that a person or animal moves with the part of their body that is mentioned pointing in the direction in which they are moving. For example, if you move somewhere 'head-first', your head is the part of your body that is furthest forward as you are moving.

Douglas had fallen head-first into the snow.

When gorillas descend, they do so feet-first, lowering themselves with their arms.

The foot is placed on the ground heel-first.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

chin-first	feet-first	heel-first
face-first	head-first	nose-first

-fold

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-fold** combines with numbers to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as having a particular number of parts. For example, if you say that something is 'twofold', you mean that it has two equally important parts or reasons.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

My interests were twofold; the first to make money, and the second to sell the public reliable goods.

Criticisms of the old system were threefold.

The aims of the new organization are eight-fold.

Words formed in this way are occasionally used as adverbs to indicate that something is multiplied a particular number of times.

Juvenile crimes of violence multiplied seventeenfold in twenty-five years.

-folk

-folk combines with nouns to form new nouns which refer to groups of people. For example, the 'womenfolk' of a community are the women who live in it; the 'townsfolk' of a town are the people who live there.

Note that nouns formed in this way are old-fashioned and occur infrequently.

The womenfolk could not use the cricket pavilion.

Where did the menfolk of the community work?

fore-

Pasta and noodles have for years been the staple dishes of economical Italian countryfolk.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

countryfolk kinsfolk menfolk townsfolk womenfolk

For more information on words that refer to people, see **-kind**, **-man**, **-people**, **-person**, and **-woman**.

fore-

1 The front

fore- combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the front part of something, or to one thing that is at the front of another. For example, a 'foredeck' is the front part of a ship's deck; the 'forelegs' of an animal are its two front legs.

The wave crashed down on the foredeck of the trawler.

...a tall, thin man with a deeply lined forehead.

...wiping the sweat from his face with a dirty forearm.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

forearm	forefoot	foreleg	forepart
foredeck	forehead	forelimb	foreshore

2 Before

fore- combines with nouns, verbs, and adjectives to form new nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Words formed in this way describe or refer to one thing that comes before and is relevant to another. For example, if you 'forewarn' someone about something, you tell them in advance that you think something unpleasant or dangerous is going to happen; your 'forefathers' are the people from whom you are descended, and whose ways and traditions you have adopted.

We were forewarned that the food would be terrible.

The critics foresaw a long and profitable future for the play.

A bee, bumbling lazily up and down the window-pane, gave a foretaste of summer joys.

An intelligent film is not necessarily foredoomed to failure.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

forebears	foreknowledge	foresight	forewarn
foreboding	foreordained	forestall	foreword
forecast	forerunner	foretaste	
foredoomed	foresee	foretell	
forefathers	foreshadow	forethought	

fore-

Words with other meanings

forearmed
forefinger

forefront
foregather

forego
foreman

foremost
forename

Franco-

Franco- occurs in words which have 'French' or 'France' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'Franco-Italian' agreement is an agreement made between France and Italy.

free-

free- combines with present participles to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something as moving or behaving without the restrictions or controls that you might normally expect. For example, traffic that is 'free-flowing' is moving freely, without any obstructions; if someone has a 'free-ranging' mind, their way of thinking is not restricted by one particular set of ideas.

Freedom from congestion could be achieved only by a new system of free-flowing roads.

...free-floating chemicals.

...an amazing man with a free-ranging intelligence.

Light free-draining land was a prerequisite to success.

Kimonos are very popular with men and women and they are both modest and free-moving.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

free-draining
free-falling
free-floating

free-flowing
free-moving
free-ranging

free-running
free-standing
free-swimming

free-thinking

-free

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-free** combines with nouns which refer to something considered to be undesirable in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something which does not have the thing mentioned. For example, if a source of income is 'tax-free', you do not have to pay tax on it; if someone is 'carefree', they have no troubles, problems, or responsibilities.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'carefree', which is written as one word.

...retirement benefits including tax-free cash and a regular income.

-ful

Not until mid-July do the lakes become ice-free and the snow begins to melt.

...to keep our fields clean of weeds and disease-free.

An electric car would be pollution-free.

It is perfectly possible to live healthily on a meat-free diet.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

accident-free	dust-free	meat-free	risk-free
additive-free	duty-free	nuclear-free	stress-free
carefree	guilt-free	oxygen-free	symptom-free
crime-free	ice-free	pain-free	tax-free
debt-free	interest-free	pollution-free	trouble-free
disease-free	lead-free	rent-free	weed-free

-free also combines in this way with the adjective 'nuclear'.

...proposals to create European nuclear-free zones.

fresh-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **fresh-** combines with the past participles of transitive verbs to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something which has been made or done recently. For example, if bread is 'fresh-baked', it has been baked recently; if land is 'fresh-ploughed', it has just been ploughed.

...the smell of fresh-baked bread.

...a vase of fresh-cut flowers.

...delicious fresh-fried doughnuts.

...several fresh-made jellies.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

fresh-baked	fresh-cut	fresh-ironed	fresh-planted
fresh-chopped	fresh-fried	fresh-made	fresh-ploughed

-ful

1 Amounts and measurement

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ful** combines with nouns that refer to things that can contain or carry things in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the amount that the container mentioned can hold. For example, a 'teaspoonful' is the amount of a powder or liquid that a teaspoon will hold; an 'armful' of something is the amount of it you can carry in one or both of your arms.

Add half a teaspoonful of salt to each pint of corn.

My school-teacher gave me a bagful of sweets.

-ful

*Pour a bucketful of cold water on top of the ash.
He drank a mouthful of cold black coffee.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

armful	fistful	mouthful	saucerful
bagful	glassful	panful	spoonful
bottleful	handful	plateful	tablespoonful
boxful	houseful	pocketful	tankful
bucketful	jugful	roomful	teaspoonful
cupful	ladleful	sackful	thimbleful

2 Characteristics and qualities

-ful also combines with nouns that refer to a particular characteristic or quality in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something as having a lot of the characteristic or quality mentioned. For example, if someone or something is 'beautiful', they are very attractive and pleasing to look at; if someone is 'deceitful', they tell a lot of lies.

*...a charming boy with the most beautiful hair.
It is a large, meaty and flavourful fungus.
The vicar called in and said what delightful news it was about John Parr.
...a shocking and shameful story.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

beautiful	dutiful	helpful	peaceful	tactful
boastful	flavourful	hopeful	playful	thankful
cheerful	forceful	joyful	powerful	useful
deceitful	graceful	merciful	shameful	youthful
delightful	harmful	painful	successful	

Words with other meanings

awful	brimful	eyeful	fruitful	rueful
baleful	doleful	fateful	grateful	wistful
bashful	earful	fitful	lawful	wrongful

full-

1 Degree or extent

full- combines with nouns and adjectives to form words which describe someone or something that has performed a particular action, or that has a particular quality, to the greatest extent possible. For example, if a person or animal is 'full-grown', they have reached their adult size and have grown as much as they are going to; if a vehicle is travelling at 'full-speed', it is travelling as fast as it possibly can.

geo-

...a full-grown adult in mind as well as body.
Hostilities had erupted into full-scale war.
...the manufacturer of a full-strength beer.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

full-blast	full-flavoured	full-grown	full-strength
full-blooded	full-force	full-scale	full-throated
full-blown	full-frontal	full-speed	full-volume

2 Whole

full- also combines with nouns to form words which describe something which occupies or includes the whole of the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, if you have a 'full-time' job, you do it for the whole of a working week; a 'full-page' advertisement in a magazine or newspaper covers a whole page.

We would have to pay a full-time man £100 a week.
On display inside the exhibition are full-size drawings of many early Ferraris.

ICI pleased the market with full-year figures showing profits of £1.47 billion.

...profits of £2 million for the full-year to February 1990.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

full-colour	full-page	full-size	full-time	full-year
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'Full-time' can also be used with this meaning as an adverb.

Jenny and I worked full-time.

full- also combines with this meaning with 'colour' to describe something which is printed entirely in colour.

...full-colour advertisements for hi-fi equipment.

Words with other meanings

full-back	full-face	full-length	full-up
full-bodied	full-fledged	full-stop	

geo-

geo- occurs in words which have 'earth' as part of their meaning. For example, 'geography' is the study of the different land formations, seas, regions, and climates of the earth; 'geopolitics' is

geo-

the study of the effects of the position and other features of a country on that country's politics.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

geocentric	geological	geophysics	geothermal
geographical	geology	geopolitical	
geography	geophysical	geopolitics	

-gon

-gon occurs in words which have 'angles' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'pentagon' is a geometric shape with five sides and five angles.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

decagon	hexagon	octagon	polygon
heptagon	nonagon	pentagon	

-gram

1 Written or drawn

-gram occurs in nouns which refer to something that is written or drawn. For example, a 'diagram' is a simple drawing that is used to show how something works; an 'anagram' is a word or phrase which is formed by changing the order of the letters in another word or phrase.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anagram	hologram	pentagram
diagram	monogram	pictogram
epigram	parallelogram	telegram

2 Weight

-gram also occurs in nouns that refer to weights in the metric system. For example, a 'kilogram' is a unit of weight that is equal to a thousand grams.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

kilogram	microgram	milligram
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-graph

-graph occurs in words which have 'writing', 'record', or 'drawing' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'paragraph' is a section of

haem-

a piece of writing and consists of a sentence or a series of sentences; a 'photograph' is a visual record produced by exposing film to light.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

autograph	holograph	paragraph	pictograph
chronograph	monograph	photograph	telegraph

great-

great- combines with nouns that refer to members of a family in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a relative who is two or more generations away from you. For example, your 'great-uncle' is the uncle of your mother or father. Someone's 'great-grandchild' is the child of one of their grandchildren.

His grandfather and great-uncle had both been merchants.

They may muddle up your parents' names with those of your great-uncles and great-aunts.

The two men may have been related, perhaps great-uncle and great-nephew.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

great-aunt	great-grandmother	great-niece
great-grandchild	great-grandparent	great-uncle
great-granddaughter	great-grandson	
great-grandfather	great-nephew	

great- sometimes occurs twice before a noun to refer to a relative who is three or more generations away from you.

Previous MP's in his family included his grandfather and a great-great-grandfather.

haem-

haem- occurs in words which have 'blood' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'haemorrhage' is serious bleeding from broken blood vessels; 'haemophilia' is an inherited disease in which a person's blood does not clot properly so that they bleed for a long time when they cut themselves.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

haematologist	haemoglobin	haemophiliac	haemorrhoids
haematology	haemophilia	haemorrhage	

half-

half-

1 Almost happening or partly true

PRODUCTIVE USE: **half-** combines with verbs, participles, adjectives, and nouns, to form new verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Words formed in this way express the idea that something almost happens, is partly the case, or is only partly true. For example, if something is 'half-finished', the work on it has not been completed; if someone is 'half-asleep', they are almost asleep.

...half-finished attempts at different jobs and studies.

The girl was half-smiling with a rather enigmatic, teasing expression.

The theatre was half-empty and there was nobody in the row they were in.

Benson sat with his eyes closed, half-brooding, half-listening.

James told us a deliberate half-truth.

A creature that lives half-buried in the sand of the sea floor.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

half-afraid	half-dressed	half-full	half-promise
half-asleep	half-eaten	half-grown	half-realize
half-brooding	half-empty	half-hearted	half-smiling
half-buried	half-fearful	half-listening	half-starved
half-cooked	half-finished	half-melted	half-truth
half-dead	half-forgotten	half-open	half-wild

half- occasionally combines with this meaning with adverbs.

The writer half-playfully suggested that Jimmie's problem might be his good looks.

For more information on prefixes which mean 'half', see **demi-** and **semi-**.

2 Part of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **half-** also combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something that is one of two equal, or approximately equal, parts that together make up the whole of the thing referred to. For example, two 'half-inches' are equal to one inch; if something is 'half-price', it costs only half of what it usually costs.

...a half-inch chain.

There is a glaring half-moon in the sky.

...the half-page advertisement for a new line of dresses.

hand-

The young men sat in a half-circle.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

half-acre	half-dozen	half-measure	half-pay
half-bottle	half-gram	half-mile	half-pint
half-century	half-hour	half-million	half-pound
half-circle	half-inch	half-minute	half-price
half-cup	half-length	half-moon	half-strength
half-distance	half-marathon	half-page	half-year

3 Race and nationality

PRODUCTIVE USE: **half-** combines with adjectives of nationality to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone whose parents come from different countries. For example, if someone is 'half-German' one of their parents is German.

...a half-French, half-German civilian who had deserted from the Army.

Annabel was of mixed parentage: half-English, half-Dutch.

...this half-Irish, half-Indian young man.

4 Brothers and sisters

Your 'half-brother' is the son of either your mother or father by another partner; your 'half-sister' is the daughter of either your mother or father by another partner.

Words with other meanings

half-back	half-caste	half-holiday	half-wit
half-baked	half-cock	half-past	
half-board	half-day	half-term	
half-breed	half-hearted	half-time	

hand-

1 Made, done, or operated by a person

hand- combines with verbs and participles to form words which indicate that something is done by a person, without the help of a machine. For example, if you 'hand-wash' your clothes, you wash them yourself in a sink rather than in a washing machine; someone's 'hand-writing' is their style of writing which they do with a pen or pencil rather than with a typewriter.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

hand-

*Hand-wash woollens in lukewarm water using a mild detergent.
Hand-weeding must go on incessantly so that weeds do not have time to seed.*

...lacy hand-crocheted shawls.

...hand-made paper of a quality unfindable today.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

hand-built	hand-made	hand-sew	hand-weeding
hand-crocheted	hand-operated	hand-stitched	hand-woven
hand-finished	hand-painted	hand-wash	handwriting
hand-knitted	hand-printed	hand-washing	handwritten

2 Carried or operated with your hands

hand- combines with nouns that refer to objects such as tools, machines, or vehicles in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something that is designed to be operated manually rather than automatically, or that is small enough to be carried by hand and used easily. For example, a 'hand-mirror' is a mirror that is small enough to hold in your hand; a 'handgun' is a gun that is small enough to carry, hold, and fire with one hand.

She was sitting on a stool looking at herself in a hand-mirror.

I'd been allowed to carry it on to the plane as hand-baggage.

Mr Boggis climbed back into the car and released the handbrake.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

handbag	handbrake	handgun	hand-luggage
hand-baggage	handcart	handkerchief	hand-mirror
hand-bell	hand-grenade	handloom	

Words with other meanings

handbill	handhold	handsome
handbook	handmaiden	handspring
handcuffs	handshake	handstand

-hand

1 Holding something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-hand** combines with nouns which refer to something which is being held in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the hand that is holding the thing mentioned. For example, your 'cup-hand' is the hand you are using to hold a cup.

He waved introductions with his cup-hand.

-head

*She pushed at the bracelet with the wrist of her flashlight-hand.
He signed the cheque against the wall, holding it there with his
phone-hand.*

The blond man held his bloody knife-hand over the young man.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

cup-hand	gun-hand	napkin-hand	racket-hand
flashlight-hand	knife-hand	phone-hand	weapon-hand

2 Jobs

-hand also combines with nouns that refer to the place where someone works, or to the animals they work with, in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a person who does a particular job. For example, a 'farm-hand' is someone who works on a farm; a 'cow-hand' is someone who works with cows.

...a disease that would have killed any healthy farm-hand.

She works as a fieldhand.

He had been working as a garage-hand in Los Angeles.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cowhand	factory-hand	fieldhand
deckhand	farm-hand	garage-hand

3 Position

-hand combines with 'left' and 'right' to form adjectives that describe the position of something. For example, a 'left-hand' seat is towards the left of a row, and a 'right-hand' seat is towards the right.

She opened the desk's left-hand bottom drawer and got out the folder of photos.

The aircraft did have a problem with the left-hand engine.

You'll find a bookcase in the right-hand corner near the window.

-head

1 Disapproval

-head combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone you disapprove of or disagree with. For example, if you call someone a 'muddlehead', you think they are behaving in a muddled or confused way; if you call someone a 'hothead', you think that they are acting hastily, without thinking of the consequences of what they are doing.

Note that words formed in this way are informal and often rude.

-head

*You're a bit of a muddlehead and lack organizational ability.
The question was addressed to the other squarehead.
...cracking a joke about the questions some pinhead had asked him.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

airhead	hothead	sleepyhead
egghead	muddlehead	sorehead
fathead	pinhead	squarehead

2 The top part of something

-head also combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to the top part of something, or to the part of an object that resembles a head. For example, a 'bed-head' is a board fixed to the top part of a bed behind your head; a 'thistle-head' is the large, top part of a thistle, where the flower is.

*...his coat of arms carved on the bed-head behind him.
...the seed-head of a poppy.
...a razor-sharp spearhead.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bed-head	flower-head	pinhead	spearhead
clubhead	masthead	seed-head	thistlehead

3 An entrance or source

-head also combines with nouns which refer to a place in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the entrance or the start of something. For example, a 'wellhead' is the point at which a well is accessible, or the structure around the top of a well; a 'railhead' is the point at which a railway starts or stops.

*...a well with a carved wellhead.
I waved the envelope at her and she immediately recognized the letterhead.
A loud bawl brought him to the stairhead. 'Somebody want me?' he roared.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bridgehead	pithead	road-head	wellhead
letterhead	railhead	stairhead	

Words with other meanings

beachhead	bulkhead	figurehead	forehead	warhead
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-headed

1 Characteristics

-headed combines with **adjectives** to form new adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe someone's attitudes or the way they behave. For example, if someone is 'big-headed', they are arrogant and think that they are very clever; if someone is 'clear-headed', they think and behave in a sensible or logical fashion.

They told us off for being big-headed.

He was industrious, ambitious and hard-headed.

...hot-headed young soldiers.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

big-headed	even-headed	level-headed	thick-headed
clear-headed	fuzzy-headed	light-headed	woolly-headed
cool-headed	hard-headed	muddle-headed	wrong-headed
empty-headed	hot-headed	soft-headed	

2 Appearance

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-headed** also combines with adjectives and nouns to form new adjectives which describe the head of a person or animal, or the top part of something. For example, if someone is 'bald-headed', they have very little or no hair on the top of their head; if something is 'wooden-headed', the top of it is made of wood.

...a bald-headed man in a short overcoat.

Many black-headed gulls have arrived from Eastern Europe.

After a moment the shaven-headed soldier spoke to Miss Ryan.

...a gold-headed cane.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bald-headed	curly-headed	heavy-headed	silver-headed
bareheaded	elephant-headed	ivory-headed	sleek-headed
black-headed	flat-headed	redheaded	small-headed
blond-headed	flaxen-headed	round-headed	stubble-headed
blunt-headed	gold-headed	shaven-headed	white-headed
crop-headed	grey-headed	shock-headed	wooden-headed

hetero-

hetero- occurs in words which have 'other', 'another', or 'different' as part of their meaning. For example, a group of things that are

hetero-

'heterogeneous' are all different; a 'heterosexual' relationship is a sexual relationship between people of different sexes.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

heterodox	heterogeneity	heterogeneous	heterosexual
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hom-

hom- occurs in words which have 'same' as part of their meaning. For example, if something is 'homogeneous', it has parts or members which are all the same or which consist of only one substance.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

homeopathy	homogenous	homosexual
homogeneous	homonym	

home-

1 In the home

PRODUCTIVE USE: **home-** combines with past participles of transitive verbs to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as being made in someone's home rather than in a shop, factory or office. For example, if something is 'home-made', it was made in someone's home; 'home-grown' fruit and vegetables have been grown in your own garden.

I bought some home-made toffee.

Don't wash home-dyed articles with biological washing powder.

...biscuits baked in the wood stove and spread with home-churned butter.

...a fortnight's supply of home-frozen food.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

home-baked	home-churned	home-frozen	home-prepared
home-bottled	home-cooked	home-grown	home-produced
home-bred	home-distilled	home-made	home-woven
home-brewed	home-dyed	home-painted	

'Home-grown' and 'home-produced' can also be used to describe something that comes from or was made in someone's own area or country.

It was hoped that home-grown food would meet Britain's needs.
Buyers will not give preference to home-produced goods if imported goods are cheaper.

-hood

2 Related to someone's home

home- combines with nouns and participles to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something or someone that is related to the home. For example, a 'home-buyer' is someone who is in the process of buying a house; if someone is 'home-loving', they like their home and are happy to spend a lot of time there.

First-time home-buyers are handicapped by the high cost of a mortgage.

Home-owners are bracing themselves for another rise in interest rates.

...home-based social lives.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

home-based	home-centred	homemaker
home-builder	home-improvement	home-owner
home-buyer	home-loving	

Words with other meanings

homecoming	homesick	home-time	homework
homeland	homespun	hometown	

-hood

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-hood** combines with nouns that refer to people in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to states, conditions, or the periods of time in which something is experienced. For example, your 'childhood' is the time of your life when you are a child; 'motherhood' is the state of being a mother.

...the passage of individuals from childhood to adolescence and parenthood.

He had written several books on the pleasures of bachelorhood.

He began to talk to me about his boyhood in London.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

adulthood	fatherhood	nationhood	widowerhood
babyhood	girlhood	parenthood	widowhood
bachelorhood	guesthood	selfhood	wifehood
boyhood	maidenhood	slobhood	womanhood
childhood	manhood	spinsterhood	
daughterhood	motherhood	studenthood	

'Manhood' and 'womanhood' can also be used to refer to all the men or women of a particular nation or community.

-hood

...everything that was good and clean and manly in French young manhood.

...a perfect specimen of English womanhood.

Words with other meanings

brotherhood
knighthood

neighbourhood
sisterhood

hydr-

hydr- occurs in words which have 'water' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'hydrant' is a pipe that is connected to the main water system and provides water for emergencies; 'hydro-electricity' is electricity produced from the energy of running water.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

hydrant
hydraulic
hydrocarbon

hydro-electric
hydro-electricity
hydro-energy

hydrofoil
hydrology
hydrometer

hydrophobia
hydro-power
hydrothermal

hyper-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **hyper-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone as having too much of a particular quality. For example, if someone is 'hyperactive', they are unable to relax and always seem to be in a state of great agitation or activity; if someone is 'hyper-alert', they are extremely alert, often in a way which affects the rest of their behaviour.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

...the problems of the hyper-active child.

The man became hypersensitive to the slightest movement around him.

He was a hyper-cautious commander who never took risks.

Even her hyperdevoted mother had criticized her.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

hyperactive
hyper-alert
hyper-cautious

hyper-conscious
hypercreative
hypercritical

hyperdevoted
hyper-modern
hypernatural

hypersensitive

hyper- occasionally combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something that is a lot larger than usual.

-ian

*...a new hypermarket often ~~ca~~ uses the closure of local supermarkets.
Hyperinflation could cause a collapse of the currency.*

hypo-

hypo- occurs in medical words which have 'below' or 'lower' as part of their meaning. For example, 'hypodermic' needles are used to give injections beneath the skin; 'hypothermia' is an abnormally low body temperature.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

hypodermic	hypoglycaemia	hypothalamus	hypothermia
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-ial

See -al.

-ian

1 A job or hobby

-ian combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a person whose job or hobby involves the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, an 'electrician' is a person whose job is to install and repair electrical equipment; a 'historian' is a person who specializes in the study of history.

Note that 'dietician' is formed from 'diet', and 'beautician' is formed from 'beauty'.

Water heaters should be removed only by a qualified electrician.

The magician tossed the rabbit across the stage.

She worked as a beautician in an expensive salon.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

beautician	historian	obstetrician	politician
comedian	magician	optician	technician
dietician	mathematician	paediatrician	theologian
electrician	musician	physician	

2 Connected with a particular person

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ian** combines with the names of famous people to form words which describe something or someone as being connected with the work of the person mentioned or the time at which they lived. For example, 'Wordsworthian' describes the type of poetry written by Wordsworth; 'Victorian' describes things that

-ian

happened or were made in Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Spelling: Names ending in 'e' usually combine with 'an' rather than **-ian**; 'an' also occasionally occurs in more established forms such as 'Elizabethan'.

*The writer's determination gives the poem a Wordsworthian force.
...the great Shakespearean tragedy Othello.
...a lovely Elizabethan house in Somerset.
...the gloomy Dickensian image of funeral parlours.
...the Freudian movement.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Chaucerian	Elizabethan	Keynesian	Wordsworthian
Darwinian	Freudian	Orwellian	|Wagnerian
Dickensian	Georgian	Shakespearean	
Edwardian	Jungian	Victorian	

Words with other meanings

amphibian	civilian	metropolitan	republican
Anglican	custodian	ovarian	suburban
bohemian	equestrian	pedestrian	urban
caesarean	guardian	Presbyterian	utopian
Christian	mammalian	reptilian	

-iana

-iana combines with nouns which refer to a person or place in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a collection of objects or information relating to the person or place mentioned. For example, objects which were made in the time of Queen Victoria are referred to as 'Victoriana'; objects such as books or documents associated with the politician Sir Winston Churchill are referred to as 'Churchilliana'.

Spelling: **-iana** only combines with nouns that end in a consonant. When the noun combined with ends in a vowel, the final vowel is replaced by 'ana'.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **-iana** to nouns, particularly if they refer to people. However, words formed in this way are not very common and few of them occur frequently.

*You may not be able to put ornate Victoriana in a modern flat.
...the middle-class disdain for Americana.*

-ible

...the display of Wellingtoniana.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

Americana	Churchilliana	Victoriana	Wellingtoniana
Australiana	Freudiana	Virginiana	

-ibility

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ibility** combines with adjectives that end in 'ible' in order to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or quality described by the adjective, or to something which is characterized by that state or quality. For example, 'accessibility' is the state of being accessible; a 'possibility' is something that is possible or might happen.

Spelling: 'ible' is replaced by **-ibility**.

*...increasing the accessibility of art to all sorts of men and women.
The women had been enthusiastic about the possibility of a longer stay.*

No one has admitted responsibility for Colonel Rowe's murder.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

accessibility	eligibility	legibility	susceptibility
audibility	feasibility	plausibility	tangibility
compatibility	flexibility	possibility	visibility
credibility	invincibility	responsibility	

Note that 'sensibility' is not the noun formed from 'sensible'. Someone's 'sensibility' is their ability to experience deep feelings and often to express their understanding of those feelings.

-ible

-ible combines with verbs to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something to which the action or process referred to by the verb can be done. For example, if something is 'digestible', it can be digested; if something is 'comprehensible', it can be easily understood.

Spelling: A final 'e' is replaced by **-ible**. A final 'd' or 'de' is replaced by 's' before adding **-ible**. A final 'it' is replaced by 'iss' before adding **-ible**.

*Raw meat is perfectly digestible, although it can be tough.
...a collapsible canvas bucket.
The cliffs were easily discernible.*

-ible

I understood that it was permissible to ask a question.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accessible	corruptible	discernible
collapsible	deductible	divisible
comprehensible	defensible	permissible
convertible	digestible	resistible

Note that the use of **-ible** is not productive. **-able** is used to form new adjectives with this meaning. For more information see **-able**.

There are also a number of adjectives ending in **-ible** that are formed from stems which are not current words in English.

It was a hot day, with every object on the sea's surface visible for miles.

Any sounds of pursuit would be clearly audible among the thickets of the ruined garden.

I want to make the game as safe as possible.

Here is a list of words formed in this way:

audible	edible	flexible	perceptible	reversible
compatible	eligible	horrible	plausible	sensible
credible	fallible	legible	possible	terrible
destructible	feasible	negligible	responsible	visible

-ic

-ic combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as resembling, involving, or being connected with the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, 'photographic' equipment and objects are connected with photographs and photography; if someone is 'enthusiastic' about something, they show a lot of enthusiasm for it.

...distributing photographic products to retailers.

He took a carving knife from a magnetic board on the wall.

Daniel laughed with idiotic pleasure.

The machine made a soft, rhythmic pulsing sound.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

acidic	cubic	idiotic	mythic
acrobatic	democratic	idyllic	patriotic
alcoholic	demonic	ironic	pedantic
angelic	diplomatic	linguistic	photographic
atomic	enthusiastic	magnetic	poetic
autocratic	gymnastic	meteoric	rhythmic
bureaucratic	heroic	moronic	symbolic

-ics

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ic** also combines with this meaning with nouns ending in **-ist** that refer to **people**. For example, if someone is 'optimistic', they have a lot of optimism about the future.

I was curiously happy and optimistic.

Gerald Brooke was a young and idealistic lecturer at a London technical college.

I was getting more and more journalistic work.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

anarchistic	chauvinistic	nationalistic	pessimistic
antagonistic	idealistic	naturalistic	socialistic
artistic	journalistic	opportunistic	traditionalistic
capitalistic	moralistic	optimistic	

A number of words ending in **-ic** combine with **-al** to form adjectives. For more information, see **-al**.

Words with other meanings

automatic	manic	periodic
classic	organic	prophetic
graphic	panic	systemic

-ics

-ics occurs in uncount nouns which refer to a subject or an area of study. For example, 'physics' is the scientific study of the behaviour of matter and energy; 'acoustics' is the scientific study of sound.

Note that nouns formed in this way usually take the third person singular form of the verb.

Physics is a means of understanding the way the world is designed.

Economics is the oldest of the social sciences.

...amazing developments in biochemistry and genetics.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

acoustics	classics	linguistics	physics
aerobics	economics	logistics	politics
aeronautics	electronics	mathematics	
athletics	genetics	obstetrics	

Some of these nouns are occasionally used as plural nouns, especially when you are talking about a particular person's work or activities. When they are used in this way they take the third person plural of the verb.

I don't know what your politics are.

-ide

-ide

-ide occurs in nouns that refer to chemical compounds. For example, an 'oxide' is a compound of oxygen and another chemical element; a 'chloride' is a compound of chlorine and another substance.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bromide	fluoride	oxide	sulphide
chloride	hydroxide	peroxide	
cyanide	iodide	phosphide	

-ify

-ify occurs in verbs that describe the process by which a state, quality, or condition is brought about. For example, if one thing 'dignifies' another, it makes it seem more impressive; if you 'beautify' something, you make it look more beautiful.

They stood admiring the broad steps that dignified the front of the mansion.

The local authority has promised to simplify planning procedures.

'Concentrate,' said Lucas, without specifying on what.

I was terrified by the bull and wanted to run out of the field.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

amplify	diversify	intensify	personify	simplify
beautify	falsify	justify	purify	solidify
clarify	glorify	magnify	qualify	specify
classify	horrify	modify	satisfy	terrify
dignify	identify	notify	signify	

il-, im-, in-, ir-

il-, im-, in-, and ir- combine with adjectives, and with nouns related to adjectives, in order to form new adjectives and nouns. Words formed in this way have the opposite meaning to the original adjective or noun. For example, if someone's actions are 'illogical', there is no logical reason for them; if you refer to someone's 'inability' to do something, you are referring to the fact that they cannot do it.

I have been possessed by a wild and entirely illogical unrest.

The robot is doing something which would otherwise be impossible.

It was stupid and irrational to feel frightened.

ill-

...the prolonged insecurity of an unhappy marriage.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

illegal	impossible	informal
illegible	impractical	injustice
illegitimate	improbable	insecurity
illiterate	inability	irrational
illogical	inadequate	irregular
immature	inaudible	irrelevant
impatient	incapable	irreplaceable
imperceptible	incomprehensible	irresistible
imperfect	independent	irresponsible

Adjectives formed in this way can be used to form **-ly** adverbs.

For more information on **-ly** adverbs, see **-ly**.

*The men behaved irrationally, acting against their own interest.
He was informally dressed, wearing slacks and an open-necked shirt.*

For more information on prefixes with a negative meaning, see **de-**, **dis-**, **non-**, and **un-**.

Words with other meanings

inborn	indifferent	ingrained	inset
inbred	infamous	ingrowing	invaluable
inbuilt	inflammable	inlaid	

ill-

1 Done badly

PRODUCTIVE USE: **ill-** combines with past participles to form adjectives. Words formed in this way describe an action as having been done badly or inadequately. For example, if something is 'ill-timed', it happens or is done at the wrong time, so that it is inappropriate or rude; if you are 'ill-informed', the information you have been given is wrong or inadequate.

*I find your jokes singularly ill-timed.
There was some ill-concealed laughter behind me.
Parents have always maintained that the headmaster was ill-advised.
The schools are understaffed, ill-equipped, and in poor repair.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ill-adapted	ill-concealed	ill-educated	ill-paid
ill-advised	ill-conceived	ill-equipped	ill-prepared
ill-assorted	ill-considered	ill-founded	ill-suited
ill-chosen	ill-designed	ill-informed	ill-timed

ill-

Note that **ill-** occasionally combines in this way with present participles.

A tall man with ill-fitting glasses that kept slipping to the end of his nose.

2 Unpleasantness

ill- combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something that is unpleasant or bad. For example, if someone is 'ill-tempered', they have a bad temper; if you have 'ill-fortune', you are unlucky.

*Victoria Station was full of anxious, ill-tempered travellers.
Alice recounted the story of her ill-fated boating expedition.
He bore ill-health with considerable fortitude.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

ill-bred	ill-fortune	ill-mannered	ill-tempered
ill-disposed	ill-health	ill-natured	ill-treatment
ill-fated	ill-humour	ill-omened	ill-will
ill-feeling	ill-luck	ill-starred	ill-wisher

ill- occasionally combines in this way with verbs.

...the type of minder who may ill-treat children in her care.

im-

See **il-**.

in-

See **il-**.

Indo-

Indo- occurs in words which have 'Indian' or 'India' as part of their meaning. For example, 'Indo-China' is a geographical region in Southeast Asia between India and China.

infra-

infra- occurs in words which have 'below' or 'beneath' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'infrastructure' of a country, society, or business is its underlying structure or organization.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

infra-red	infrasonic	infrasound	infrastructure
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-ing

1 Forming present participles

-ing combines with the base form of verbs to form the present participle.

A lady came slowly walking across the field.

We sat in the hotel lounge drinking.

I turned to Elaine to make sure she was watching.

2 Present participles used as nouns

Some present participles are used as nouns to refer to the activity described by the verb. For example, if you dance, you can say that you like 'dancing'.

We celebrated with music and dancing.

He managed to find time for reading.

She simply loathed cooking.

3 Present participles used as adjectives

When the present participles of transitive verbs are used as adjectives, they describe the effect that something has on someone's feelings and ideas. For example, if you find something 'disgusting', it disgusts you.

The beer at the Rugby Club was disgusting.

...a brilliantly amusing novel.

...one of the most frightening sights I have ever seen.

When the present participles of intransitive verbs are used as adjectives, they describe a continuing process or state. For example, a 'recurring' problem is one that occurs repeatedly.

...the nation's recurring industrial crises.

...currents driven by the prevailing wind.

...a small ageing man in an elderly car.

Note that there are a number of adjectives ending in **-ing** that are formed from stems that are not current words in English.

He woke up in the night with an excruciating pain.

...the announcement of Flight Two's impending departure.

...a cunning solution to the problem.

Here is a list of words formed in this way:

appetizing	cunning	excruciating	scathing
balding	enterprising	impending	unwitting

For more information about the present participle of verbs, see the Collins Cobuild English Grammar.

-in-law

-in-law

-in-law combines with nouns which refer to members of your family in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone who is related to you by marriage. For example, your 'father-in-law' is the father of your husband or wife; your 'daughter-in-law' is your son's wife.

He wondered if he should put his elderly father-in-law in a home.
He took his sister-in-law home to England.
My daughter and son-in-law led a hard life.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

brother-in-law	father-in-law	parents-in-law	son-in-law
daughter-in-law	mother-in-law	sister-in-law	

inter-

1 Between

PRODUCTIVE USE: **inter-** combines with nouns and adjectives that refer to a person, place, or thing in order to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as existing or happening between two or more people or things. For example, an 'inter-city' train goes from one city to another; an 'international' competition involves two or more nations.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...inter-city phone calls.
...an inter-continental flight back to England.
...the building of the interstate highways.
...inter-racial relations.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

inter-city	international	interseasonal
intercontinental	inter-office	interstate
inter-department	interpersonal	inter-stellar
inter-family	interplanetary	interterritorial
inter-government	inter-racial	inter-union
interlanguage	inter-school	inter-university

2 Connection

inter- also combines with verbs, and with nouns and adjectives related to verbs, in order to form words which indicate that two or

-ion

more people or things are related or connected in some way. For example, things that 'interconnect' are connected to each other; if people or things are 'intermingled', they have become mixed together.

...a complicated network of interconnecting parts.

There was a quick interchange of information between the men.

...a beautiful sari interwoven with a pattern of red and gold.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

interact	interdependence	interlock	interrelate
interbreeding	interknit	intermarriage	intersection
interchange	interlace	intermingled	intertwine
interconnect	interlink	interplay	interweave

intra-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **intra-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe one thing as existing or taking place within another. For example, 'intra-Community' trade is carried out within the European Community.

Note that adjectives formed in this way are formal and occur infrequently.

...intra-Community police co-operation.

Modern Pan-Africanism starts from quite new intra-African bases.

...intra-party groupings such as the chartist-socialists.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

intra-African	intra-European	intra-racial
intracellular	intra-generation	intra-regional
intra-class	intramuscular	intra-uterine
intra-Community	intra-party	intravenous

-ion

-ion combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or process described by the verb, or to an instance of that process. For example, if you give someone 'protection', you protect them or keep them safe from unpleasant effects and events; an 'explanation' is something which explains or gives a reason for a particular event or situation.

Spelling: There are a number of variations of the spelling of **-ion**. The most common ones are 'ation', 'ition', 'sion', and 'tion'.

Examples of all of these are given below.

-ion

...protection against the sun's rays.

...the realization of how close I had been to death.

...the great Picasso exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

...a fifty-percent reduction in staff.

I think that I made the wrong decision.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

action	contribution	exhibition	production
addition	creation	explanation	protection
collection	decision	imagination	reaction
combination	direction	information	realization
conclusion	education	operation	reduction
connection	examination	organization	situation

Words with other meanings

affection attention disposition edition mission

-ious

See **-ous**.

ir-

See **il-**.

-ise

See **-ize**.

-ish

1 Nationality or language

-ish occurs in words which refer to or describe the people, language, or characteristics of a particular country or region. For example, if someone is 'Irish', they come from Ireland; 'Danish' is the language spoken in Denmark; the 'English' refers to all the people who come from England.

...Irish workers based in London.

...a tall youth who spoke only Polish.

...a cheery bedroom with Swedish furniture.

California inherited much of its law from the Spanish.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

British	English	Irish	Moorish	Spanish
Cornish	Finnish	Jewish	Polish	Swedish
Danish	Flemish	Kurdish	Scottish	Turkish

2 With adjectives

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ish** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something as having a small amount of the characteristic or quality described by the original adjective. For example, if something is 'longish', it is fairly long; if someone is 'tallish', they are fairly tall; if something is 'greenish', it is slightly green in colour.

Note that words formed in this way are informal.

Spelling: A final 'e' is replaced by **-ish**. If a word of one syllable ends in a 'b', 'd', 'g', 't', or 'n' preceded by a single vowel, the 'b', 'd', 'g', 't', or 'n' is doubled before adding **-ish**.

After tea he wrote a longish letter to Hilda.

The early sky was a pale whitish blue.

He was a biggish fellow.

...three yellowish wooden armchairs.

Mr and Mrs Bixby lived in a smallish apartment.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

biggish	darkish	greenish	plumpish	warmish
blackish	dullish	largish	reddish	wettish
bluish	fattish	longish	smallish	whitish
brownish	flattish	lowish	tallish	youngish
dampish	goodish	oldish	thinnish	

3 With nouns

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ish** combines with nouns to form adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe one person or thing as being like another. For example, if a man is 'boyish', he is very youthful in appearance and behaviour and looks like a boy; if someone is 'foolish', they behave like a fool.

Spelling: A final 'e' is replaced by **-ish**. If a word of one syllable ends in a 'b', 'd', 'g', 't', or 'n' preceded by a single vowel, the 'b', 'd', 'g', 't', or 'n' is doubled before adding **-ish**.

His boyish charm was irresistible.

...childish misbehaviour.

As a plot it was amateurish beyond belief.

-ish

...his low womanish round shoulders.

...an American girl with an owlsh, spectacled face.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

amateurish	coquettish	hellish	priggish
babyish	devilish	impish	prudish
bearish	feverish	kittenish	slavish
boyish	fiendish	mannish	sluttish
brutish	foolish	monkish	snobbish
bullish	girlish	nightmarish	wolfish
childish	hawkish	owlsh	womanish

-ish occasionally combines in this way with names.

He was a nice enough boy—rather Jimmy Olsenish I thought.

...the air-conditioned Disneylandish shopping centre.

4 Age or time

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ish** combines with words referring to times, dates, or ages in order to form words which indicate that the number or time mentioned is approximate. For example, if someone is 'fortyish', they are about forty years old; if you say you will do something around 'noonish', you mean that you will do it at about noon.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

Mrs Hoyland Leach was a florid, fortyish lady.

Shall I ring you about nine-ish?

Words with other meanings

bookish	peckish	sharpish	sluggish
feverish	rakish	sheepish	stylish
outlandish	selfish	shrewish	ticklish

-ism

1 Beliefs and behaviour

-ism occurs in nouns which refer to particular beliefs, or to behaviour based on these beliefs. For example, 'feminism' is the belief that women should have the same rights, power, and opportunities as men; 'pessimism' is the belief that bad things will happen or are happening, or that a particular thing will be unsuccessful or bad.

The popular image of feminism unfortunately tends to repel many women.

-ism

*He was accused of impiety **and** atheism.*

*There was a definite air of **optimism** at the headquarters.*

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

atheism	feminism	pacifism
fascism	optimism	pessimism

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ism** combines with this meaning with nouns and adjectives in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to beliefs and behaviour based on the thing referred to or described by the original noun or adjective. For example, 'cynicism' is the attitude that cynics have towards people and things in which they always expect the worst of them; 'modernism' is the ideas and methods of modern art and literature.

...a growing cynicism about politics.

The Labour movement wanted more democracy, socialism and unity.

...plans to counter hooliganism.

In some schools, malaria is estimated to cause high absenteeism rates.

The founder of Methodism lived here for the last years of his life.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

absenteeism	Hinduism	opportunism
alcoholism	hooliganism	patriotism
anarchism	humanism	perfectionism
barbarism	idealism	professionalism
capitalism	Impressionism	Protestantism
Catholicism	industrialism	realism
Communism	internationalism	scepticism
consumerism	Judaism	socialism
cynicism	liberalism	symbolism
expressionism	Methodism	terrorism
extremism	modernism	totalitarianism
heroism	nationalism	vandalism

-ism occasionally combines in this way with names.

...the intellectual influence of Marxism.

...the analysis of eleven years of Thatcherism.

Note that **-ism** also combines in this way with some nouns to form new nouns that refer to a form of discrimination based on the thing described by the original noun. For example, 'sexism' is the idea or belief that the members of one sex are less intelligent or less capable than those of the other sex.

...an organization set up to counter sexism in the Church.

-ism

Older women encouraged back to work still face ageism.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

ageism racism sexism

The ending **-ism** can often change to **-ist** to form words which refer to or describe people who have particular beliefs or behaviour based on these beliefs. For more information, see **-ist**.

2 Actions and ceremonies

-ism combines with some verbs ending in 'ize' or 'ise' in order to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the process described by the verb, or to an instance of that process. For example, if you make a 'criticism' of someone, you criticize them because you disapprove of them or their behaviour; 'baptism' is the religious ceremony during which someone is baptized.

Teachers are intensely sensitive to any sort of criticism.

Patricia began to ask him about hypnotism and how it worked.

...exorcism of the harmful spirits.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

baptism exorcism magnetism plagiarism
criticism hypnotism mechanism specialism

For more information on verbs ending in 'ize' or 'ise', see **-ize**.

Words with other meanings

euphemism mannerism tourism witticism
journalism organism truism

iso-

iso- occurs in words which have 'equal' or 'identical' as part of their meaning. For example, 'isotopes' are atoms which have the same atomic number but have a different number of neutrons; an 'isosceles' triangle is a triangle which has two sides that are the same length.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

isobar isometric isosceles isotope

-ist

1 Beliefs and behaviour

-ist occurs in nouns which refer to a person whose behaviour is based on a particular set of beliefs. For example, a 'feminist' is

-ist

someone who believes that women should have the same rights, power, and opportunities as men; a 'pessimist' is someone who believes that bad things will happen or are happening, or that a particular thing will be unsuccessful or bad.

Claudia thought of herself as a feminist.

He is a convinced atheist.

I'm an optimist by nature.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

atheist	feminist	pacifist
fascist	optimist	pessimist

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ist** combines with this meaning with nouns and adjectives in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone whose beliefs and behaviour are based on the thing referred to or described by the original noun or adjective. For example, if someone is an 'idealist', they try to base their behaviour on their ideals; a 'terrorist' attack is an attack by people who use violence to achieve their political aims.

You don't have to be an idealist to realise that there's something wrong with this society.

...a vigorous civil rights activist.

Mr Morris was always a perfectionist.

...a leading industrialist with business interests in Germany.

...the history of the socialist movement in Europe.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

activist	expressionist	internationalist	realist
anarchist	extremist	Methodist	socialist
capitalist	humanist	modernist	terrorist
communist	idealist	nationalist	
conformist	Impressionist	opportunist	
elitist	industrialist	perfectionist	

-ist occasionally combines in this way with names.

Would you call yourself a Marxist?

...Jansenist repression.

Note that **-ist** also combines in this way with some nouns to form new nouns that refer to a form of discrimination based on the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, if you describe someone, especially a man, as a 'sexist', you mean that you think they have ideas based on sexism.

We had to sit through a cabaret full of sexist jokes.

The consequences of being a racist are serious.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

ageist	racist	sexist
--------	--------	--------

-ist

The ending **-ist** can often change to **-ism** to form words which refer to the beliefs or behaviour mentioned. For more information, see **-ism**.

2 Occupations or study

-ist also combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to someone whose work or study involves the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, a 'novelist' is someone who writes novels; a 'scientist' is someone whose work or study is connected with one of the sciences.

*How would George Eliot compare with a novelist like Jane Austen?
A good cartoonist can capture a face in a few lines.
She was chief physiotherapist at Massachusetts Memorial Hospital.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anaesthetist	educationalist	physiotherapist
artist	educationist	psychiatrist
botanist	environmentalist	satirist
cartoonist	historicism	scientist
columnist	lyricist	soloist
dentist	novelist	therapist
dramatist	pharmacist	tourist
economist	physicist	typist

-ist also combines in this way with nouns ending in **-ology**. For example, a 'biologist' is someone whose job involves the study of biology.

*...a developmental biologist at the Institute for Cancer Research.
Geologists noticed very odd shapes in the ancient sandstone.
...an ancient burial site discovered by archaeologists.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anthropologist	ecologist	meteorologist	psychologist
archaeologist	geologist	microbiologist	sociologist
biologist	graphologist	neurologist	technologist
climatologist	gynaecologist	ornithologist	zoologist

3 Musicians

-ist also combines with nouns that refer to a musical instrument in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone who plays the instrument mentioned, especially if they do it as their profession. For example, a 'guitarist' is someone who plays the guitar; a 'pianist' is someone who plays the piano.

*...the rhythm guitarist of Cliff Richard's old backing group.
His father, a violinist, obtained work in small orchestras.*

-itis

The student oboist began to play Delius.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

accordionist	bassoonist	flautist	oboist	trombonist
altoist	cellist	guitarist	pianist	tympanist
bassist	clarinettist	keyboardist	saxophonist	violinist

Words with other meanings

chemist	cyclist	naturalist	specialist
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Italo-

Italo- occurs in words which have 'Italian' or 'Italy' as part of their meaning. For example, an 'Italophile' is someone who admires Italy and the Italians.

-ite

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ite** combines with names to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to someone who is a follower or supporter of the person mentioned. For example, a 'Trotskyite' is someone who believes in the political ideas of Leon Trotsky; 'Lawsonite' policies are based on the ideas put forward by the British politician Nigel Lawson.

Note that words formed in this way are often used to suggest that you disagree with or disapprove of someone's beliefs.

...a wealthy American Trotskyite.
He didn't want to be labelled a Baldwinite.
The long Thatcherite nightmare is coming to an end.
Harold Wilson condemned the exercise as McCarthyite.

-ition

See **-ion**.

-itis

1 Illness

-itis occurs in some nouns which refer to an illness. For example, you suffer from 'tonsillitis' when your tonsils are swollen and sore; 'hepatitis' is a serious disease that affects the liver.

It was last winter when he had tonsillitis.

-itis

Her fingers were badly swollen with arthritis.
Do you ever get rashes, dermatitis or spots?

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

appendicitis	bronchitis	hepatitis	tonsillitis
arthritis	dermatitis	meningitis	

2 Obsession

-itis combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to an unusual obsession or preoccupation with the thing referred to by the original noun. For example, 'weddingitis' refers to an unusual preoccupation with weddings.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **-itis** to nouns. However, words formed in this way are very informal and usually intended to be humorous. Few of them occur frequently.

Weddingitis is now at fever pitch.
She was now obviously suffering from auctionitis.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

auctionitis	consumeritis	weddingitis
campaignitis	relationitis	

-ity

-ity combines with adjectives to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or condition described by the adjective. For example, 'immunity' is the state of being immune to something; 'anonymity' is the state of being anonymous.

Babies receive immunity to a variety of infections through breast feeding.

The war had brought prosperity to Port Philip.
...the growing equality of women.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

abnormality	creativity	generosity	productivity
absurdity	curiosity	hostility	prosperity
anonymity	diversity	immunity	security
authenticity	equality	intensity	sensitivity
brutality	familiarity	originality	simplicity
complexity	formality	popularity	superiority

Words with other meanings

locality	minority	personality	priority
majority	morality	principality	publicity

-ive**1 Adjectives**

-ive occurs in a large number of adjectives, some of which are formed from stems which are not current words in English. For example, if someone is 'creative', they have the ability to create and develop new ideas; if an activity or business is 'lucrative', it earns someone a lot of money or makes large profits.

A youngster has more time to be creative.

Rumours will make you feel even more nervous and apprehensive.

Most tinned fruits contain excessive amounts of sugar.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

active	comprehensive	effective	lucrative
aggressive	constructive	excessive	massive
alternative	creative	expensive	negative
apprehensive	decisive	extensive	offensive
attractive	defensive	imaginative	productive
competitive	destructive	intensive	protective

2 Nouns

-ive also occurs in nouns. For example, a 'detective' is someone whose job is to find out what happened in a particular crime and to find the people involved; an 'additive' is something which is added in small amounts to something such as food or petrol in order to improve it or to make it last longer.

He sent a detective upstairs to examine Mrs Wilt's clothes.

...you need initiative and willingness to work to improve your education.

Her narrative began uncertainly with a rambling account of her childhood.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

additive	executive	missive	prerogative
archive	incentive	motive	preservative
collective	initiative	narrative	relative
conservative	invective	objective	representative
contraceptive	laxative	offensive	sedative
detective	locomotive	perspective	

-ize**1 Actions**

-ize combines with nouns to form verbs. Verbs formed in this way refer to actions that involve or are related to the original noun. For

-ize

example, if you 'apologize' to someone, you give them an apology and tell them you are sorry for something you have done or said; if you 'sympathize' with someone, you have sympathy for them and share their feelings, often when they have had some misfortune.

He apologized for being late.

The events of the wedding were characterized by muddle.

Lorries and trains have revolutionized the entire pattern of moving goods.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

apologize	epitomize	moralize	subsidize
characterize	fantasize	philosophize	summarize
criticize	jeopardize	pressurize	symbolize
emphasize	memorize	revolutionize	sympathize

2 Bringing about a state or condition

-ize also combines with nouns and adjectives that refer to a state or condition in order to form verbs. Verbs formed in this way describe the process by which the state or condition mentioned is brought about. For example, if someone 'terrorizes' you, they make you feel terror by threatening you in some way; if you 'tenderize' meat, you make it more tender by preparing it in a particular way.

Forbes allowed his dog to terrorize the officer on duty.

...farm workers victimized for joining a trade union.

...an act to legalize abortion.

The Prime Minister wants Nato to modernize short-range nuclear weapons.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

colonize	harmonize	modernize	standardize
democratize	hospitalize	neutralize	sterilize
dramatize	industrialize	personalize	tenderize
equalize	institutionalize	publicize	terrorize
generalize	legalize	rationalize	victimize
glamorize	mobilize	stabilize	visualize

3 -ise

'ise' is often used as an alternative spelling of **-ize** in British English but there are some verbs which always end in 'ise' rather than **-ize**. Most of these are formed from stems which are not current words of English.

Here is a list of words written in this way:

advertise	compromise	exercise	supervise
advise	despise	improvise	surmise
arise	devise	practise	surprise
comprise	disguise	promise	televise

-led

Words with other meanings

agonize	civilize	materialize	scandalize
authorize	economize	organize	scrutinize
capitalize	fertilize	realize	specialize

kilo-

kilo- occurs in nouns that refer to things which have a thousand parts. For example, a 'kilogram' is a metric unit of weight of a thousand grams; a 'kilometre' is a measurement of length containing a thousand metres.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

kilobyte	kilogram	kilolitre	kilowatt
kilocalorie	kilohertz	kilometre	

-kind

-kind combines with nouns that refer to people in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a group of the people mentioned. For example, you can refer to all women as 'womankind' when you are considering them as a group.

The present day Hottentot and Bushmen females are the last remnants of the original shape of womankind.

...mankind will seek to explore and exploit space.

Ecology teaches us that humankind is not the centre of life on the planet.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

humankind	mankind	womankind
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For more information on words that refer to people, see **-folk**, **-man**, **-people**, **-person**, and **-woman**.

-led

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-led** combines with nouns and adjectives of nationality in order to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that are controlled, organized, or influenced by whatever the original nouns and adjectives refer to or describe. For example, if an activity is 'student-led', students are responsible for it; if production of something is 'demand-led', the amount produced of that thing is controlled by the size of the demand for it.

...the student-led pro-democracy movement.

-led

...Comecon, the Soviet-led trading organisation.

...a community-led partnership of local people.

...a market-led economy.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

American-led	earnings-led	labour-led	Soviet-led
communist-led	employee-led	market-led	state-led
community-led	employer-led	moderate-led	student-led
consumer-led	government-led	Muslim-led	teacher-led
demand-led	investment-led	opposition-led	worker-led

-less

1 Lacking something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-less** combines with nouns to form adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that do not have or do whatever is referred to. For example, if something is 'harmless', it cannot harm you; if something is 'meaningless', it has no meaning.

Most people think of measles as harmless.

The injustice of it all left me speechless.

The room was characterless, a clean neat room with oddments of furniture.

He hummed a tuneless song to himself.

Note that some adjectives formed in this way are used in a non-literal way. For example, if you describe somebody as 'brainless', you mean that you think that they are stupid and silly.

'You're brainless. You can't even count.'

He was a spineless coward.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

airless	flawless	meaningless	speechless
beltless	harmless	motherless	spineless
brainless	heartless	motionless	spotless
characterless	helpless	nameless	tactless
childless	hopeless	powerless	thoughtless
effortless	humourless	restless	tuneless
endless	lifeless	seedless	useless

Adjectives formed in this way can be used to form **-ly** adverbs.

For more information on **-ly** adverbs, see **-ly**.

At the airport there were refugees, desperate to get out, milling hopelessly around.

Agrot had studied the text, and studied it endlessly.

2 Exceeding a category

-less also combines with nouns or verbs to form adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things whose qualities cannot be measured in terms of whatever the noun or verb refers to. For example, if a group of things is 'countless', it is so big that it is almost impossible to count them; if a work of art is 'priceless', it is so valuable that it is impossible to put a price on it that matches its worth.

...sausages, pork pies, hamburgers, chips, ice cream, cakes and countless other products.

A small, spry, ageless nun dragged the gate open.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

ageless	countless	numberless	priceless	timeless
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Words with other meanings

artless	regardless	shiftless	wireless
listless	relentless	stainless	

-let

1 Smaller things

-let combines with nouns to form new nouns. Words formed in this way describe things that are smaller examples of whatever the noun refers to. For example, a 'droplet' is a very small drop of liquid; a 'booklet' is a book that has only a very few pages.

Into this aperture a droplet of mercury was poured.

They found a piglet caught in a curtain of creepers.

Shrubs and roots of huge trees watered by the rivulet fill the crevice.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

booklet	droplet	islet	rivulet
coverlet	eaglet	owlet	starlet
cutlet	froglet	piglet	streamlet

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **-let** to nouns. However, words formed in this way are fairly informal and few of them occur frequently.

Daisy's flatlet consisted of one room, with a sink and a gas oven.

They each contributed their own ploy or ploylet and passed it on.

2 Jewellery

-let also occurs in nouns that refer to jewellery. For example, a 'bracelet' is a piece of jewellery you wear around your wrist or arm; an 'anklet' is a piece of jewellery you wear around your ankle.

-let

*A gold bracelet watch was ripped from the bound wrist of Mrs Ross.
...a circlet of nine pearls.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anklet	armlet	bracelet	circlet	wristlet
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Words with other meanings

ballet	bullet	gullet	triplet
billet	couplet	leaflet	

-like

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-like** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that are similar to whatever the nouns refer to. For example, if someone is 'childlike', they are similar to a child in the way they look and behave; if a building is 'prison-like', it looks like a prison.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

She has a sweet and childlike nature.

Tigers have sharp, dagger-like claws.

The flowers of mature lime trees have a delicious honey-like fragrance.

He pulled himself through between the smooth pillar-like rocks.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

animal-like	claw-like	daisy-like	flower-like	owl-like
baby-like	clock-like	desert-like	fox-like	pillar-like
bird-like	clown-like	dog-like	honey-like	prison-like
cat-like	cowlike	doll-like	hook-like	vice-like
childlike	dagger-like	dreamlike	ladylike	

Note that **-like** is often used in this way with names.

He looked away from the Barry-like young man.

...a Proust-like scheme.

Words with other meanings

businesslike	lifelike	suchlike	warlike
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-logue

-logue occurs in words which have 'speaking' or 'discussion' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'dialogue' is a conversation or

-ly

discussion between two or more people; a 'travelogue' is a talk or film about travel.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

catalogue	dialogue	epilogue	prologue
decatalogue	duologue	monologue	travelogue

-ly

1 Forming adverbs

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ly** combines with adjectives to form adverbs.

Adverbs formed in this way express the idea that something is done in the way described by the adjective. For example, if somebody smiles 'happily', they smile in a way that looks happy; if you do something 'rapidly', you do it in a rapid way. Adverbs formed in this way can often be used with adverbs of degree such as 'very' to show the extent to which the qualities described are true.

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'i' before adding **-ly**.

My sister was singing very happily.

They walked quickly between the lines of houses.

...an opportunity to buy oil cheaply.

Her voice and manner changed suddenly; she became critical and dogmatic.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

badly	exactly	naturally	rapidly
cheaply	finally	normally	recently
clearly	frequently	obviously	seriously
directly	gradually	perfectly	slowly
easily	happily	properly	suddenly
equally	immediately	quickly	usually

Note that the adverb formed from 'good' is 'well'.

2 Forming adjectives

-ly combines with nouns and occasionally adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things or people that have the qualities or characteristics which are typical of the original nouns and adjectives. For example, if someone is 'lively', they are very active, enthusiastic, and cheerful; if someone is 'friendly', they behave in a pleasant and kind way as if they are or would like to be your friend.

They are bright, alert and lively.

-ly

They were beautiful, lovely people.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

brotherly	fatherly	lonely	orderly	westerly
costly	friendly	lovely	saintly	womanly
deadly	heavenly	lowly	shapely	worldly
earthly	kindly	manly	sickly	
easterly	leisurely	motherly	sisterly	
elderly	lively	northerly	southerly	

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'i' before adding 'er' and 'est' to form the comparative and superlative forms of these adjectives. For more information, see **-er** and **-est**.

*The officer guarding me was one of the friendlier ones.
He tends to choose the costliest solution rather than the least-costly.*

Here is a list of comparative and superlative adjectives:

costlier	kindlier	lonelier	lowlier
costliest	kindest	loneliest	lowliest
friendlier	livelier	lovelier	sicklier
friendliest	liveliest	loveliest	sickliest

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ly** combines with nouns that refer to people in order to form adjectives. For example, 'soldierly' skills are skills that a soldier typically has; 'musicianly' interests are interests that a musician is likely to have.

To prove their soldierly abilities they started cutting off the knot of hair the Navahos wore.

She was on neighbourly terms with the Woods.

3 Frequency

-ly combines with nouns that refer to periods of time in order to form words which indicate how often something happens or is done. For example, 'weekly' shopping trips happen once a week; if you wash your hair 'daily', you wash it every day.

Spelling: The adjective formed from 'day' is 'daily'.

*...a weekly payment of seven shillings.
Kate visited him daily, sometimes twice daily.
...an excellent hourly train service to London.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

daily	hourly	quarterly	yearly
fortnightly	monthly	weekly	

-made

Words with other meanings

chiefly	highly	namely	timely
fully	mainly	nearly	utterly
hardly	merely	only	virtually

macro-

macro- occurs in words which refer to or describe things which are large in size or scope. Words formed in this way are usually technical or scientific. For example, 'macroeconomics' is the study of economics on a national scale.

In macroeconomics it is necessary to have both planning and freedom.

...the macrocosm of the outer world.

...macro-scale correlations..

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

macrobiotic	macroeconomics	macromolecular	macro-scale
macrocosm	macro-graph	macro-objectives	macro-structure

-made

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-made** combines with nouns and adjectives, especially those that refer to people, places, or nationalities, in order to form new adjectives. Words formed in this way describe things which have been produced in a particular way or place, or by a particular group of people. For example, if food is 'home-made', it was cooked in someone's home rather than bought in a shop; if a product is 'British-made', it was produced in Britain.

...Grandmother's home-made brown bread.

The line of boulders looked quite like the foundations of a man-made wall.

...hand-made items from skilled craftsmen.

...a mass-produced, machine-made article.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

American-made	French-made	new-made
British-made	fresh-made	purpose-made
Chinese-made	German-made	ready-made
country-made	hand-made	Soviet-made
custom-made	Hollywood-made	tailor-made
European-made	home-made	US-made
factory-made	machine-made	
foreign-made	man-made	

Note that a 'self-made' man is someone who started life without

-made

money, education, or social position and who has become rich and successful by his own efforts.

mal-

mal- combines with nouns, adjectives, and verbs to form new nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Words formed in this way refer to or describe things that are bad or unpleasant, or that are unsuccessful or imperfect in some way. For example, if someone suffers from 'malnutrition', they have not eaten enough good food; if a machine 'malfunctions', it doesn't work properly.

Malnutrition lowers resistance to illness.

The child is thoroughly maladjusted.

...the criminal maldistribution of the world's food resources.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

malabsorption	maldistribution	malnutrition
maladjusted	malformation	malodorous
maladjustment	malfunction	malpractice
maladministration	malnourished	maltreatment

For more information on words with this meaning, see **mis-**.

Words with other meanings

maladroit	malaria	malice	malignant
malaise	malevolent	malign	malinger

man-

man- combines with nouns and participles that refer to or describe an action in order to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe things which affect or are affected by people, or actions affecting people. For example, if something is 'man-made', it is made by people rather than being formed naturally; 'man-management' is the control and organization of the people involved in a business or similar concern.

Note that words formed in this way relate to people of either sex, and not just men in particular.

Man-made materials are preferable to natural materials.

Man-devised processes work reliably only when applied to non-living materials.

-man

All leopards everywhere are under attack as potential man-killers.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

man-destroying	man-killer	man-watching
man-devised	man-made	man-worshipping
man-eating	man-management	
man-hunt	man-powered	

Words with other meanings

manhandle	man-hour	manpower	manslaughter
manhole	mankind	manservant	

-man

1 Occupation or interests

-man combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to people whose job or occupation involves whatever the original noun refers to. For example, a 'clergyman' is a member of the clergy and works for the Christian church; a 'fireman' is someone whose job is to put out fires.

...the college clergyman, the Reverend Rigger.

Dixon paid the garage-man and the taxi moved off.

He started in television as a cameraman, but progressed to directing.

When the barman set their glasses in front of them, they drank to Mary Jane.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

barman	dairyman	gunman	salesman
businessman	deliveryman	milkman	seaman
cameraman	fireman	policeman	stuntman
clergyman	fisherman	postman	taxman
coalman	garage-man	railwayman	tradesman
committeeman	gasman	repairman	weatherman

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-man** combines with nouns that describe a place of work, a piece of equipment, or the thing that someone works with.

He was the best camel-man in town.

The lighting-man is a highly experienced old pro.

Note that words formed in this way are often used generally to refer to people of either sex. Many people think this is wrong, however, and prefer to use '-woman' when the person referred to is a woman, and '-person' or '-people' when the sex of a person or group of people is not known or is not thought to be important.

For more information on words that refer to people, see **-folk**, **-kind**, **-people**, **-person**, and **-woman**.

-man

2 People's origins

-man combines with the names of places and with adjectives describing nationality in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a man who comes from the particular town, county, or country named. For example, a 'Yorkshireman' is a man who comes from, or lives in, Yorkshire; a 'Welshman' is somebody who comes from Wales. Words formed in this way are never used to refer to women.

Even though the Yorkshireman finished two seconds outside his best, the race was no anti-climax.

In Wungong, there is a single general store, run by a Chinaman.

The greatest of Scotsmen was the first economist, Adam Smith.

McCalden is an Ulsterman who trained as a teacher.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Chinaman	Englishman	Scotsman	Yorkshireman
Cornishman	Frenchman	Ulsterman	
Dutchman	Irishman	Welshman	

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-man** combines with any noun which describes a place.

Although my parents have always lived in towns, I feel like a countryman.

They are as amazed and delighted as an Earthman would be on learning that Martians cook by gas.

3 Numbers of people

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-man** combines with any number to show that something involves or is intended for use by the number of people mentioned. For example, football is played by an 'eleven-man' team; a 'two-man' tent is designed for two people to sleep in. **Man-** is usually used in this way to refer to people of either sex.

The organization secured a majority on the eleven-man National Committee.

...the sound of an eighty-man orchestra playing the overture.

The Rooikat is a four-man, eight-wheel vehicle.

Behind Crown counsel are three rows of seats for the fifteen-man jury.

Words with other meanings

batsman	footman	gentleman	marksman
bushman	foreman	handyman	nobleman
caveman	freshman	highwayman	ombudsman
chairman	frogman	hitman	spokesman
con-man	front-man	layman	statesman
everyman	gamesman	linesman	yes-man

-mate

-mania

-mania occurs in nouns which refer to unusual behaviour caused by a compulsion to do a particular thing. For example, 'kleptomania' is a strong and uncontrollable desire to steal things; 'pyromania' is an uncontrollable urge to set fire to things.

A teacher unaided by a child's parents can seldom cure kleptomania. Kawukji was obsessed with himself; his egomania knew no bounds. Kennedy's assassination was the greatest act of megalomania in modern crime.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

egomania	kleptomania	monomania
erotomania	megalomania	nymphomania

-mate

-mate combines with nouns that refer to a place or activity in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to a person who shares that place with someone or who helps them with that particular activity. For example, your 'flatmate' is the person who shares a flat with you; a 'workmate' is someone you work with.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

Laura clearly felt that her flatmate had been in the way. I sought permission to swap shifts with a workmate. He met an old schoolmate of his from Umtata. His cabin-mate, Sandy, was still feeling under the weather.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bedmate	clubmate	roommate	team-mate
cabin-mate	flatmate	schoolmate	workmate
classmate	playmate	shipmate	

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-mate** combines with any noun that describes a place or activity that you share with someone.

Anne, a cheerful nine-year-old, seemed Linda's best desk-mate. Otto's watch-mate was due to make his appearance just at that moment. ..her tent-mate of the previous summer.

Words with other meanings

checkmate	inmate	soul-mate	stalemate
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matri-

matri-

matri- or **matr-** occurs in words which have 'mother' or 'woman' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'matriarch' is the female head of a society, family, or organization; a 'matron' can be either a middle-aged married woman, a woman who looks after the health and hygiene of children in boarding schools, or a very senior nurse in a hospital.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

matriarch matriarchal matricide matron

mega-

1 Size

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mega-** combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things which are extremely large or important. For example, 'megabucks' refers to a great deal of money; a 'megaloss' is the loss of a very large amount of money.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

Megabucks are there for the taking.
...another massive mega-acquisition.
...these megablocks of flats.
...Italy's megastar, Giorgio Armani.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mega-acquisition	mega-bureaucracy	megaloss
mega-bid	mega-buyout	mega-production
megablock	mega-documentary	megarock
megabucks	mega-fantasy	megastar

Note that words formed in this way are very informal. They occur frequently in conversation, especially amongst young people, and tend to sound exaggerated. **mega** is also often used as a word by itself in informal conversation to mean extremely large or extremely good.

2 Measurement

mega- combines with nouns that refer to units of measurement in order to form new nouns that refer to units that are a million times bigger. For example, a 'megahertz' is a unit of frequency, especially radio frequency. One 'megahertz' equals one million cycles per second.

-ment

*Hydrogen has a characteristic frequency of 1,420 megahertz.
...500,000 megatons of TNT.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

megabyte	megahertz	megawatt
megacycle	megaton	

Words with other meanings

megalithic	megalomania	megalomaniac	megaphone
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-ment

-ment combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the process of making or doing something, or to the result of this process. For example, if you are proud of an 'achievement', you are proud of something you have achieved or caused to happen; you make an 'adjustment' when you adjust something or adjust to something; 'excitement' is the emotion you feel when you are excited.

...the achievement of equality for women.

...the rapid development of British industry.

The weather showed signs of improvement.

Fanny saw with amazement that the letter was addressed to her.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

abandonment	assessment	improvement
accomplishment	assignment	investment
achievement	attachment	involvement
acknowledgement	attainment	management
adjustment	commitment	movement
advertisement	deployment	payment
agreement	development	punishment
amazement	discouragement	puzzlement
amusement	employment	replacement
announcement	enjoyment	requirement
argument	entertainment	resentment
arrangement	excitement	retirement

Words with other meanings

apartment	detriment	government	sentiment
armament	document	instrument	settlement
basement	element	monument	shipment
comment	embankment	ointment	statement
compartment	environment	parliament	supplement
complement	equipment	pavement	temperament
compliment	establishment	placement	testament
department	experiment	secondment	treatment

-meter

-meter

-meter occurs in words which refer to instruments or devices that measure things, particularly for scientific purposes. For example, a 'speedometer' is an instrument that measures the speed of a car or other vehicle; a 'mileometer' is an instrument that measures the distance in miles that a vehicle has travelled.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

acidimeter	calorimeter	hydrometer	speedometer
altimeter	chronometer	mileometer	thermometer
barometer	colorimeter	pedometer	voltmeter

-metre

-metre occurs in nouns that refer to units of length that are either greater or smaller than a metre. For example, there are a hundred 'centimetres' in a metre; a 'kilometre' is a thousand metres long.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

centimetre	kilometre	millimetre	nanometre
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micro-

micro- occurs in nouns that have 'very small' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'micro-organism' is a very small organism which cannot be seen with the naked eye; a 'microscope' is an instrument which magnifies very small objects so you can look at them and study them. Nouns formed with **micro-** are often used in technical or scientific language.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

microbiology	micro-environment	microscope
microcomputer	microfilm	microsecond
micro-economics	microgram	microstructure
microelectronics	micro-organism	microsurgery

Words with other meanings

microlight	microphone	microprocessor	microwave
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mid-

1 Time

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mid-** combines with nouns that refer to months, years, and particular parts of the day in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the middle part of a particular period of time. For example, if something happens in 'mid-June', it happens in the middle of June; if something happens at 'midnight', it happens at twelve o'clock in the middle of the night. **mid-** does not combine with nouns that refer to days of the week or to precise times.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

Although it was mid-June, the weather outside was a fine chill drizzle.

It was a Saturday in midsummer.

They run out of energy in mid-evening at the end of each busy day.

The Promenade Concerts have been organized by the BBC since the mid-1920s.

They were huddled into two or three coats against the mid-October chill.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mid-afternoon	mid-evening	mid-morning	mid-week
mid-century	mid-hour	midnight	midwinter
midday	mid-month	midsummer	

Note that **mid-** is sometimes used in this way with expressions which refer to someone's age.

...a portly gentleman in his mid-fifties.

...a boy in his mid-teens.

2 Position

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mid-** combines with nouns that refer to a particular place or area in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the central part of that place or area. For example, if something happens in 'mid-ocean', it happens in the middle of an ocean; 'mid-America' is the central part of America.

He saw it glide past him, as a ship passes another in mid-ocean.

The ship backed into mid-harbour and dropped anchor.

The taxi, in mid-road, was just beginning to reverse.

mid-

...a mid-air collision in British airspace.

...the Ratgoed Valley, near Machynlleth in mid-Wales.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mid-air	mid-channel	mid-Europe	mid-road
mid-America	mid-court	mid-harbour	mid-stairs
mid-Atlantic	mid-Devon	mid-ocean	mid-Wales

3 Actions

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mid-** also combines with nouns that refer to or involve an action in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way are usually used in prepositional phrases beginning with 'in', but can also be used to modify other nouns. Words formed in this way express the idea that the action referred to is not completed. For example, if someone stops in 'mid-bite', they stop in the middle of biting something; if someone stops talking in 'mid-sentence', they stop before they have finished what they are saying.

Mr. Solomon and Mrs. Babcock froze guiltily in mid-bite.

Boon, frozen in mid-stride, glared at me.

A commotion out in the hall stopped Meadows in mid-sentence.

She was playing Chopin on the piano; I heard her stop in mid-prelude.

...a mid-flight shutdown of a perfectly good engine.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mid-banter	mid-guffaw	mid-race	mid-syllable
mid-bite	mid-life	mid-section	mid-term
mid-career	mid-lunge	mid-sentence	mid-verse
mid-composition	mid-page	mid-session	mid-voyage
mid-flight	mid-passage	mid-step	mid-whirl
mid-flow	mid-prelude	mid-stride	mid-yawn

Words with other meanings

midpoint	midstream	midwife
midriff	midway	

milli-

milli- occurs in words which have 'thousand' or 'thousandth' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'millilitre' is a metric unit of

-minded

volume for liquids and gases which is equal to one thousandth of a litre.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

milliamp	milligram	millimetre	milli-rad
millidegree	millilitre	millipede	millisecond

-minded

1 Attitudes and characteristics

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-minded** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe the character, attitudes, or opinions of particular people. For example, if someone is 'single-minded', they have only one aim or purpose and are determined to achieve it; if someone is 'narrow-minded', they are unwilling to consider new ideas or opinions.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'broadminded', which is written as one word.

He loved India with the single-minded devotion that some men give to their work.

She was possibly even more serious-minded than her father.

Johan became more broadminded about race the longer he stayed in England.

...an attractive, strong-minded Scots girl.

She is very obedient, but so absent-minded, careless and untidy.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

absent-minded	liberal-minded	right-minded
bloody-minded	like-minded	serious-minded
broadminded	literal-minded	single-minded
dirty-minded	mean-minded	small-minded
evil-minded	narrow-minded	strong-minded
fair-minded	open-minded	tidy-minded
generous-minded	petty-minded	tough-minded
high-minded	practical-minded	weak-minded

2 Interests and aims

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-minded** combines with nouns to form adjectives that describe people who are interested in or concerned with a particular thing. For example, if someone is 'community-minded', they are interested in and take account of the needs of the community; if someone is 'career-minded', they are committed to their career and want to make a success of it.

Some community-minded seniors had left us.

-minded

...liberal and reform-minded governments.

The Americans are the most sports-minded nation in the world.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

acquisition-minded
career-minded
church-minded
civic-minded
community-minded
economy-minded

expansion-minded
future-minded
management-minded
marriage-minded
nuclear-minded
peace-minded

reform-minded
security-minded
sports-minded
war-minded

3 Intelligence

-minded also combines with adjectives to form new adjectives that describe someone's intellectual qualities. For example, if you describe someone as 'simple-minded', you mean that they are not very clever and cannot think intelligently; if someone is 'lively-minded', they are intelligent and able to think quickly.

He is simple-minded and totally unable to understand anyone more complicated than himself.

...a beautiful, sharp-minded actress.

Never have so many people been as bright-minded, as curious and as critical as the young today.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bright-minded
empty-minded

feeble-minded
fuzzy-minded

lively-minded
sharp-minded

simple-minded
woolly-minded

mini-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mini-** combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to a smaller version of a particular thing. For example, a 'minibus' is a small bus; a 'mini-skirt' is a very short skirt.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'minibus', which is written as one word.

They would be providing minibuses to carry staff to and from work.

...the most successful company in the mini-computer field.

...a mini-expedition to Everest with just four climbers and a few sherpas.

Promotion is based on mini-exams or teachers' assessment of performance.

mis-

The drums of chemicals were located by an unmanned mini-submarine.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mini-budget	mini-dress	mini-scooter
minibus	mini-exam	mini-series
mini-cab	mini-expedition	mini-skirt
mini-camera	mini-explosion	mini-submarine
mini-city	mini-golf	mini-summit
mini-computer	mini-lecture	mini-team
mini-cruise	mini-market	mini-tour
mini-documentary	mini-rugby	mini-version

Words with other meanings

miniature minimal minimize minimum

mis-

mis- combines with verbs and nouns to form new verbs and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to things that are done wrongly or badly. For example, if you 'mishear' what someone says to you, you think that they said something different from what they actually said; a 'misunderstanding' occurs when someone fails to understand something properly.

I was sure I had misheard the question.

He jumped at what he thought was the right moment, misjudged, and fell to the bottom of the boat.

I was wondering where I'd picked up this piece of blatant misinformation.

...the enormity of the student's misconception.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

misapprehension	mishear	mispronunciation
misbehave	misinform	misquotation
misbehaviour	misinformation	misquote
miscalculate	misinterpret	misread
miscalculation	misjudge	misrepresentation
misconception	misjudgement	mistreat
misconduct	mismanage	mistrust
misconstrue	mismanagement	misunderstand
misdirect	misplace	misunderstanding
misfortune	misprint	misuse

For more information on words with this meaning see **mal-**.

Words with other meanings

misadventure	misdeed	misguided	mistake
miscarriage	misdeemeanour	mislay	mistook
mischance	misfit	mislead	
mischievous	misgiving	misshape	

mock-

mock-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **mock-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe things that are an imitation or copy of something else. For example, if someone displays 'mock-aggression', they are pretending to be aggressive; if a house is described as 'mock-Tudor', it has been made to look like the houses built in Tudor times.

She spoke quietly, with none of her usual mock-aggression.

...a mock-English public-house.

Instead of honest, simple crafts, he prefers mock-expensive products.

...a deliberately mock-provocative look.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

mock-aggression	mock-fight	mock-sadness
mock-attack	mock-flirtatious	mock-savage
mock-childish	mock-heroics	mock-style
mock-Chippendale	mock-imperial	mock-sulk
mock-courtesy	mock-innocent	mock-surprise
mock-discomfort	mock-Latin	mock-Tudor
mock-English	mock-modesty	mock-wrestling
mock-expensive	mock-provocative	mock-yawn

Words with other meanings

mockery mocking mock-up

-monger

-monger occurs in nouns that have 'trader' or 'dealer' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'fishmonger' is a person who sells fish; an 'ironmonger' is someone who works in a shop selling tools, nails and other things made out of metal. **-monger** also occurs in some words which refer to people who start or encourage rumours of some kind. For example, a 'warmonger' encourages people to expect war or tries to get a war started.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

fishmonger	rumourmonger	tattle-monger	whoremonger
ironmonger	scaremonger	warmonger	

mono-

mono- occurs in words which have 'one' or 'single' as part of their meaning. For example, 'monogamy' is the custom of being married

much-

to only one person at a time; if you speak in a 'monosyllabic' way you use words that have only **one** syllable.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

monocentric	monocracy	monologue	monotheism
monochrome	monoculture	monoplane	monotone
monocle	monogamy	monosyllabic	monoxide

-most

-most combines with adjectives that describe position in order to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that are situated further in a particular direction than other things of the same kind. For example, the 'topmost' sheet of paper is the one that is highest or nearest the top; the 'northernmost' part of a country is the area that is farthest towards the north.

Families of cranes nested in the topmost branches of the tree.

...the innermost room of the castle.

They hurled themselves from sleighs on to the rearmost carriages.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

easternmost	lowermost	outermost	topmost
hindmost	nethermost	rearmost	uppermost
innermost	northernmost	southernmost	westernmost

Words with other meanings

foremost	utmost	uttermost
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much-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **much-** combines with past participles to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that the qualities or states they describe are true to a great extent. For example, a 'much-respected' person is someone who is respected a great deal; a 'much-needed' thing is something there is a great need for.

He was a long serving and much-respected member of staff.

Schools raise much-needed cash by letting their facilities in the evening.

...the author of a much-acclaimed book.

For a young child, the death of a much-loved pet can be a terrible blow.

much-

...Hearst's own account of her much-publicized kidnapping.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

much-abused	much-criticized	much-prized
much-acclaimed	much-discussed	much-publicized
much-admired	much-improved	much-quoted
much-appreciated	much-loved	much-respected
much-beloved	much-maligned	much-travelled
much-changed	much-married	much-tried
much-complimented	much-needed	much-vaunted
much-copied	much-praised	much-worn

multi-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **multi-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that there is a large number of a particular thing, or a large amount of a particular quality. For example, a 'multinational' company is one which operates in a number of countries; a 'multi-purpose' tool is a tool that can be used for more than one purpose.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...the dismantling of the economic system from the multinational companies downwards.

...commitment to human rights and multi-racial harmony.

...a manifesto for next year's multi-party elections.

...a multi-flavoured white wine.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

multi-candidate	multi-family	multi-million
multi-children	multi-flavoured	multinational
multi-choice	multilateral	multi-party
multi-coloured	multi-layered	multi-purpose
multicultural	multi-legged	multi-racial
multi-dimensional	multi-level	multi-screen
multi-faceted	multilingual	multi-storey
multi-faith	multi-media	multi-talented

Words with other meanings

multiplication	multiply
multiplicity	multitude

-naut

-naut occurs in nouns that refer to people who navigate or control a vehicle of some kind. For example, an 'astronaut' is a person who is

trained to fly in a spacecraft; an 'aeronaut' is the pilot of a hot-air balloon or airship.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aeronaut cosmonaut
astronaut

Note that a 'juggernaut' is a type of very large lorry and not the person who drives it.

near-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **near-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way express the idea that something has almost all of the qualities usually associated with the original noun or adjective. For example, if you describe something as 'near-perfect', you mean that you think there is so little wrong with it that it is almost perfect; a 'near-accident' is an incident which could easily have led to an accident but did not.

We completed the climb in near-perfect conditions.

The inexperience of the pilots produced near-disaster.

...all shades from pink to near-black.

The tree was a hardy, near-wild variety.

Mick and I collapsed into near-hysterical laughter.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

near-accident	near-crisis	near-landless	near-silence
near-bankrupt	near-disaster	near-miraculous	near-slum
near-black	near-equal	near-monopoly	near-vacuum
near-capacity	near-hysterical	near-panic	near-vertical
near-certainty	near-identical	near-perfect	near-white
near-chaos	near-impossible	near-permanent	near-wild

Words with other meanings

near-neighbour	nearside	near-term
near-relative	near-sighted	

neo-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **neo-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe things or people that follow a previous example of something, but that are slightly different because they have been changed, adapted, or brought up to date. For example, 'neo-classical' architecture uses designs based upon classical Greek and

neo-

Roman architecture and art; a 'neo-Freudian' is someone whose beliefs are based on the teachings of Freud.

Note that words formed in this way are fairly formal and few of them occur frequently.

To the left is a neo-classical church, St John's.

...a kind of neo-Stalinism.

To some, this appeal for a form of neo-populism will no doubt seem naive.

...real Tudor chimneys, and neo-Tudor turrets beyond.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

neo-Aristotelian	neo-Darwinism	neo-Nazi
neo-baroque	neo-expressionism	neo-Nazism
neo-bourgeoisie	neo-Freudian	neo-Platonic
neo-classical	neo-Georgian	neo-populism
neo-classicism	neo-Gothic	neo-Stalinism
neo-colonialism	neo-Liberal	neo-Tudor
neo-colonialist	neo-Marxist	

Words with other meanings

neocortex	neolithic	neo-natal	neotechnic
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-ness

PRODUCTIVE USE: -ness combines with adjectives to form nouns that refer to the state or quality described by the adjective. For example, 'gentleness' is the quality of being gentle; 'happiness' is the state of being happy.

Spelling: A final 'y' is replaced by 'i' before adding -ness.

There was a gentleness about his face.

He took advantage of my utter helplessness.

...an awareness of the child's real needs.

My disbelief gave way to sadness.

...the Sunday emptiness of the streets.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

aggressiveness	consciousness	happiness	permissiveness
attractiveness	deafness	helplessness	rudeness
awareness	drunkenness	illness	sadness
awkwardness	effectiveness	kindness	sickness
bitterness	emptiness	loneliness	sweetness
blindness	foolishness	loveliness	tenderness
boldness	friendliness	madness	ugliness
carelessness	gentleness	nervousness	weakness
cleverness	goodness	openness	youthfulness

Words with other meanings

business forgiveness likeness witness

neur-, neuro-

neur- or **neuro-** occurs in words which have 'nerve' or 'nervous system' as part of their meaning. For example, 'neuralgia' is a very severe pain along the whole length of a nerve; 'neurology' is the study of the nervous system. Words formed in this way are formal and medical uses.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

neuralgia	neurology	neuro-physiology
neurectomy	neuromuscular	neuropsychiatry
neuroanatomy	neuron	neurosurgeon
neurobiologist	neuro-pharmacology	neurotoxin

new-

1 Recently done

PRODUCTIVE USE: **new-** combines with past participles to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that have been made or done very recently. For example, 'new-baked' bread is bread that has been made very recently; a 'new-found' ability is one you have discovered recently.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'newborn', which is written as one word.

Mothers now have six weeks off from work to nurse their newborn babies.

...the new-built palace of St. James.

New-hatched frogs hopped about like flies.

...new-baked bread.

...his short strong hands with hairy fingers and new-clipped nails.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

new-baked	new-cut	new-hatched	new-pointed
newborn	new-fashioned	new-laid	new-skinned
new-built	new-fledged	new-made	new-washed
new-clipped	new-floored	new-minted	new-wedded
new-coined	new-found	new-mown	new-won

2 Recent

new- combines with nouns and present participles to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe

new-

things that have been made or come into existence recently. For example, 'new-generation' technology is technology which makes use of the most recent developments; something that is 'new-smelling' smells as though it is new.

...new-generation pressurized water reactor stations.

...a former Kremlin leader, running for election to a new-style parliament.

...inside, among the new-smelling oak panels.

His suitcase was new-looking but cheap.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

new-age	new-look	new-smelling
new-generation	new-looking	new-style

news-

news- combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things that are connected with the news in some way. For example, a 'newspaper' is a publication printed on large sheets of paper giving information about recent events; a 'newsletter' is made up of a small number of printed sheets containing recent information about a group or organization.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

...a journalist on an anti-Government newspaper.

...a small tobacconist and newsagent shop in Paddington.

...the newsroom where the reporters were clattering on typewriters.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

newsagent	newsfilm	newsman	newsreel
newsboy	newsflash	newspaper	newsroom
newscast	newsletter	newsprint	news-sheet
newsdesk	news-magazine	newsreader	news-stand

News- is also used with this meaning to form the adjective 'newsworthy'. If something is 'newsworthy', it is sufficiently interesting to be reported in the news.

...a particularly macabre and newsworthy crime.

non-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **non-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way express the

-ocracy, -ocrat

idea that a person or thing does not have the qualities or characteristics referred to. For example, a 'non-smoker' is someone who does not smoke; if you take up a 'non-aggressive' position, you approach something in a way that is not aggressive. **Non-** also combines with nouns that refer to a particular kind of action to express the idea that that action has not been taken. For example, if you refer to the 'non-acceptance' of something, you are referring to the fact that it has not been accepted.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common words are written as one word.

He chain smoked, which isn't very pleasant for a non-smoker like me.

If the landlord is non-resident, the landlord does not have right of access.

The answer is not non-change, but a different kind of change.

...simple non-economic values like beauty, health, or cleanliness.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

non-academic	non-classical	non-payment	non-target
non-aggressive	non-committal	non-problem	non-verbal
non-athletic	non-competitive	non-profit	non-violence
non-believer	non-economic	non-reader	non-violent
non-binding	non-essential	non-resident	non-virtue
non-biological	non-fatal	non-smoker	
non-change	non-human	non-specialist	

Note that **non-** also combines with adverbs that derive from the adjectives given above.

Eighty percent of the meaning in a conversation passes non-verbally.
In 1975 his son succeeded non-violently to the leadership.

For more information on prefixes with a negative meaning, see **de-**, **dis-**, **il-**, and **un-**.

Words with other meanings

non-drip nonentity nonsense

-ocracy, -ocrat

-ocracy occurs in nouns which refer to a particular type of ruling body or powerful class of people. For example, a 'democracy' is a system of government in which people choose their rulers by voting for them in elections; the 'aristocracy' is a class of people whose

-ocracy, -ocrat

families have a high social rank and, in some countries, special titles.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aristocracy	bureaucracy	technocracy
autocracy	democracy	

-ocrat occurs in nouns which refer to someone who is a member of one of these groups. For example, a 'democrat' is someone who believes in the ideals of democracy; an 'aristocrat' is someone whose family belongs to the aristocracy.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

aristocrat	bureaucrat	technocrat
autocrat	democrat	

octa-, octo-

octa- and **octo-** occur in words which indicate that something has eight parts. For example, an 'octagon' is a geometrical shape which has eight straight sides; an 'octopus' is a sea creature with eight limbs.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

octagon	octave	octopus
octahedron	octogenarian	octosyllabic

off-

1 Position

PRODUCTIVE USE: **off-** combines with nouns which refer to a place in order to form words which are used in front of other nouns. Words formed in this way describe places, things, or events which are not situated or do not happen in a particular place or the expected place. **off-** is only used in this way when the noun it combines with is usually used with the preposition 'on'. For example, if students live in 'off-campus' accommodation, they do not live on the campus of their college or university; if there are 'off-stage' noises in a play, they do not happen on the stage, but in the part of the theatre that is just behind or to the side of the stage.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are written with a hyphen with the exception of 'offshore', which is written as one word.

...off-campus social life.
...offshore oil production.

-off

...the off-field pressures of captaincy.

Words formed in this way are **occasionally** used as adverbs.

*Tina, a Swedish girl, wanted **to** live off-campus with a friend.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

off-Broadway	off-field	off-screen	off-stage
off-campus	off-piste	offshore	off-track
off-court	off-road	off-site	

2 Showing that something is not the case

off- also combines with some **other** nouns to form words which express the idea that whatever is referred to by the noun is not the case. For example, if you are 'off-balance', you are standing in a way that is not properly balanced and can easily fall or be knocked over; if something is 'off-centre', it is not exactly in the middle of a space or surface.

There was a stone under his boot, and he was off-balance.

...cheap, or off-peak electricity.

It is easy to be taken off-guard.

Words formed in this way are **occasionally** used as adverbs.

The music was slow now; a single fiddle played a mournful solo off-key.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

off-balance	off-guard	off-peak
off-centre	off-key	off-season

Words with other meanings

offbeat	off-day	off-limits	offshoot
off-chance	off-duty	off-load	offside
off-colour	off-hand	off-putting	offspring
offcut	off-licence	offset	off-white

-off

-off combines with adverbs to form adjectives which describe how much money someone has. For example, if someone is 'well-off', they have plenty of money; if someone is 'badly-off', they do not have very much money.

They were evidently well-off enough to throw away a perfectly good kitchen chair.

There were many comfortably-off business or professional people.

Words formed in this way are **occasionally** used as nouns.

-off

The better-off obtain the best housing.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

badly-off
better-off

comfortably-off
well-off

worse-off

-oholic

See **-aholic**.

-oid

-oid occurs in words which express the idea that something resembles or is related to something else. For example, if something is 'humanoid', it resembles a human being in some way; if something is 'cuboid', it is shaped like a cube.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cuboid

fungoid

humanoid

spheroid

tabloid

-old

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-old** combines with nouns and noun groups which refer to a period of time in order to form words which indicate how old something is. Words formed in this way usually consist of a number and the singular form of a noun such as 'week' or 'year' followed by **-old**. For example, a 'six-month-old' animal was born six months ago; a 'five-year-old' is a child who is five years old.

They were taking the six-month-old seal from Thief Sand, where it lay bleeding.

A double engine failure on the twelve-week-old jet had been ruled out.

The killers had murdered a ten-year-old girl.

A seventy-year-old seldom sprints upstairs.

...a good teacher who can inspire and stimulate the eight-year-olds.

The expressions 'age-old' and 'centuries-old' are used to indicate that something is extremely old, or that it has existed for a long time.

...the age-old suspicion between parents and children.

...square-cut Norman churches surrounded by centuries-old grey stone houses.

-ological, -ology

-ology occurs in nouns which refer to an area of study or a system. For example, 'biology' is the study of living things such as plants

on-

and animals; 'methodology' is a system of methods or principles for doing a particular thing.

He went to Manchester University in 1961 to study biology.

...the enthusiasm for astrology and the occult.

...the sort of phraseology used by some journalists.

...modern theories of child psychology.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

anthropology	graphology	neurology	technology
archaeologist	gynaecology	ornithology	terminology
astrology	ideology	pathology	theology
biology	meteorology	phraseology	zoology
climatology	methodology	physiology	
ecology	microbiology	psychology	
geology	mythology	sociology	

Adjectives are formed from these nouns by replacing **-ology** with **-ological**.

Soak the garments overnight in lukewarm water and biological washing powder.

...an archaeological expedition to Turkey.

Words with other meanings

anthology apology tautology

omni-

omni- occurs in words which have 'all' as part of their meaning. For example, if someone is 'omnipotent', they have complete power over things or people; if a person or animal is an 'omnivore', they eat all kinds of food, including meat and plants.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

omnipotent omnipresent omniscience omnivore

on-

on- combines with nouns which refer to a place in order to form words which describe the place where something happens or exists. For example, 'onshore' oil is found on land rather than at sea; 'on-stage' dancing takes place on a stage.

The oil fields of Oman are primarily onshore.

He showed the same on-court flair that had carried him to a semi-final victory.

...the problem of how to organize on-site inspection.

on-

Words formed in this way are occasionally used as adverbs.

...the gates will be built onshore.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

on-court	on-screen	on-site
on-field	onshore	on-stage

Words with other meanings

on-board	ongoing	onside	onwards
oncoming	on-line	onward	

once-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **once-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe someone or something that used to have a particular quality or characteristic but no longer has. For example, a 'once-famous' person used to be famous but is not famous any more.

...the ruins of a once-famous castle.

The once-great man was treated as a buffoon.

...the once-powerful unions controlling the broadcasting industry.
A once-thriving badger population has been reduced to just a few individuals.

Hundreds of other once-common species have similarly become rarities.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

once-celebrated	once-great	once-powerful
once-common	once-happy	once-private
once-famous	once-lively	once-respected
once-fashionable	once-lovely	once-thriving
once-feared	once-luxurious	
once-forgotten	once-popular	

-or

-or combines with verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to people who do the action described by the original verb, usually because it is their job. For example, an 'actor' is someone whose occupation is acting in plays and films; a 'supervisor' is a person who supervises people or activities.

He was an extremely fine actor.

...conductor of the Bach Society Orchestra.

-osis

He has become a frequent visitor to our house.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

actor	conductor	inspector	oppressor
adjudicator	conspirator	instructor	possessor
administrator	contractor	inventor	prosecutor
advisor	contributor	investigator	protector
agitator	coordinator	investor	sailor
auditor	counsellor	invigilator	spectator
collaborator	creator	manipulator	speculator
collator	director	moderator	supervisor
collector	distributor	narrator	visitor
commentator	editor	navigator	
competitor	governor	operator	

-or also combines with verbs to form nouns that refer to things rather than people. For example, a 'calculator' is a small electronic device that you use for doing calculations.

Pupils are expected to learn how to use a pocket calculator.

She went in and took the small elevator to the fourth floor.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

applicator	compressor	escalator
aspirator	detector	reactor
calculator	elevator	refrigerator

Note that the use of **-or** is not productive. **-er** is used to form new nouns with this meaning.

For more information see **-er**.

-osis

1 A process or state

-osis occurs in nouns which refer to a process or state. For example, 'metamorphosis' is an event or process in which someone or something changes into something completely different; 'hypnosis' is a state of unconsciousness in which a person seems to be asleep but can see or hear things and respond to things said to them.

...the metamorphosis of the Viscount into Count Dracula.

Joan's fever led to a diagnosis of pneumonia.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

diagnosis	metamorphosis	prognosis
hypnosis	osmosis	

2 Illness or disease

-osis also occurs in nouns which refer to an illness or disease. For example, 'tuberculosis' is a serious infectious disease which affects

-osis

someone's lungs; 'neurosis' is a mental illness which causes people to have continual, unreasonable fears and worries.

...deaths from whooping cough, measles and tuberculosis.

Twenty-nine million people died of cirrhosis of the liver.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cirrhosis	neurosis	sclerosis	tuberculosis
myxomatosis	psychosis	thrombosis	

-ous

-ous occurs in adjectives which describe someone or something as having a particular quality. For example, if someone is 'adventurous', they are willing to take risks and try new methods; if food is 'delicious', it has a very pleasant taste or smell.

Spelling: There are a number of variations of the spelling of **-ous**. The most common ones are 'eous', 'ious', and 'uous'. Examples of all of these are given below.

I can't help wishing that Sinclair had been a bit more adventurous.

The work was arduous and poorly paid.

She was superstitious and believed firmly in ghosts.

...a grave, courteous man in late middle age.

I was furious and told them to get out of my house.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

advantageous	contemptuous	impetuous	serious
adventurous	continuous	marvellous	simultaneous
ambiguous	courageous	mysterious	spacious
ambitious	courteous	nervous	spontaneous
anonymous	curious	nutritious	superstitious
anxious	dangerous	obvious	suspicious
arduous	enormous	previous	tenacious
cautious	famous	religious	tremendous
conscious	furious	righteous	various
conspicuous	gracious	sensuous	virtuous

out-

out- combines with verbs, nouns, and adjectives to form new verbs. Verbs formed in this way describe someone or something as doing a particular action much better or to a greater extent than another person or thing. For example, if you 'outrun' someone, you succeed in running somewhere faster than they do; if you 'outdo' someone, you are a lot more successful than they are at a particular activity; if one thing 'outgrows' another, it grows until it is bigger than the other thing.

over-

*...no one was able to outrun this incredible athlete.
England were outplayed in the second Test.
English ships easily outmanoeuvred the lumbering galleons of the
Spanish fleet.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

outbid	outlast	outsell	out-talk
outclass	outlive	outsmart	out-walk
outclimb	outmanoeuvre	outsprint	outwit
outdo	outpace	outstare	
outgrow	outplay	outstrip	
outjump	outrun	outswim	

Words with other meanings

outrage out-vote outweigh

over-

1 Excess

over- combines with adjectives, verbs, and nouns to form new adjectives, verbs, and nouns. Words formed in this way indicate that a quality exists or an action is done to too great an extent. For example, if you 'overload' something, you put too large a load on it; if someone is 'overweight', they weigh more than they should do.

The pilot warned him that the plane was overloaded and wouldn't fly.

Men and women of squarer build, if they overeat, are very likely to become obese.

Do not over-react if your child gets into trouble at school.

Every ledge of the cliff is overgrown with vegetation.

He took an overdose of seasickness pills and slept through it all.

He was over-anxious to keep an appointment.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

overabundance	overcrowd	overexposure	overrate
over-anxious	over-demanding	overfill	over-react
overawe	over-developed	overgrown	oversize
overburden	overdo	overheat	oversized
over-cautious	overdose	over-indulgence	oversleep
overcharge	overdue	overload	overspend
overcompensate	over-eager	over-populated	overweight
over-confident	overeat	overproduce	overwork
overcook	overestimate	over-protective	over-worried

over-

2 Age

PRODUCTIVE USE: **over-** combines with numbers to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way are always used in the plural form and refer to people who are older than the number mentioned.

...daycare for over-fives.

The over-sixties want to do something that the community values.

3 Power

over- also combines with verbs and nouns to form new verbs. Verbs formed in this way express the idea that one person or group of people has power or authority over another. For example, if a group of people 'overthrow' a leader or government, they remove them by force and take power for themselves; if one thing 'overrides' another, it replaces the other thing or reduces its importance.

...a secret group that helped him overthrow the King.

Thieves dressed as policemen overpowered guards at a Boston museum.

The European Court of Justice has the power to overrule statutes.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

overcome	override	overrun	overturn
overpower	overrule	overthrow	overwhelm

Words with other meanings

overall	overhear	overshadow	overtime
overalls	overkill	overshoot	overtone
overbalance	overlook	oversight	overture
overcoat	overnight	overspill	overview
overflow	overseas	overstatement	
overhang	oversee	overtake	

pan-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **pan-** combines with adjectives which describe a nation or a particular group of people in order to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that is connected with or involves the whole of the nation or group of people mentioned. For example, a 'pan-African' project is one which involves the whole of Africa; a 'pan-continental' airline is one which serves the whole of a particular continent.

...pan-African nationalism.

The companies mentioned tended to be large pan-American companies.

...broadcasting live sports coverage via the satellite to a pan-European audience.

para-

...a *pan-Indian institution*.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

pan-African	pan-continental	pan-Hellenic	pan-Slavic
pan-American	pan-European	pan-Indian	
pan-Arab	pan-German	pan-national	

para-

1 Similarity

para- combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe one thing which is very similar to another. For example, a 'paramilitary' organization is similar to an army, but is not the official army of a country; a 'paramedic' is a person whose training is similar to that of a nurse and who helps to do medical work.

They were jailed for organizing, training and equipping a paramilitary organization.

Not all ambulance staff were trained paramedics.

Paratyphoid is a highly infectious form of food poisoning.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

paramedic	para-professional
paramilitary	paratyphoid

2 Activities involving parachutes

para- occurs in nouns which refer to activities connected with parachutes, or to the people who use them. For example, 'paragliding' is a sport in which you use a specially designed parachute; a 'paratrooper' is a soldier who is trained to be dropped by parachute into battle or enemy territory.

The paratroopers and glider-borne infantry would launch the assault.

...there are water-skiing and paragliding facilities on the main beach.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

parachute	parasailing	paratrooper
paragliding	parascending	

Words with other meanings

paradigm	paralyse	parapet	parasites
paradise	parameter	paraphernalia	parasol
paradox	paramount	paraphrase	
paragraph	paranoid	paraplegic	
parallel	paranormal	parapsychology	

part-

part-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **part-** combines with past participles and nouns to form new adjectives and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to something which is partly but not completely the thing mentioned by the original past participle or noun. For example, if you are the 'part-owner' of something such as a business, you share it with one or more other people; if someone gives you a 'part-explanation' of something, they tell you some things about it, but not everything.

*John Robinson was editor and part-owner of the Natal Mercury.
He handed me the rest of his part-cooked meal.
The mountain was part-concealed by snow.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

part-assembled
part-boarded

part-concealed
part-constructed

part-cooked
part-owner

part-ownership
part-payment

Words with other meanings

part-exchange
part-singing

part-time
part-way

part-work

penta-

penta-occurs in words which indicate that something has five parts. For example, a 'pentagon' is a geometrical shape with five straight sides; a 'pentathlon' is a sporting competition which has five events.

Here is list of words with this meaning:

pentagon

pentagram

pentameter

pentangle

pentathlon

-people

-people combines with nouns to form new nouns which refer to groups of people who live in a particular place, or who are involved in a particular activity. For example, the 'townspeople' of a town are the people who live there; 'salespeople' are people who make their living by selling goods.

*The soldiers posted notices ordering the townspeople to stay indoors.
The tribespeople of Bomvanaland lived on hills and in valleys.
Ibbett denied that the salespeople had been told.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

country-people

townspeople

tradespeople

tribespeople

-person

Note that words formed in **this** way are not used in the singular. For example, you would not refer to someone as a 'townsperson'.

For more information on words that refer to people, see **-folk**, **-kind**, **-man**, **-person**, and **-woman**.

-person

1 Occupation or involvement

-person combines with **nouns** to form new nouns which refer to someone who carries out a **particular** role or has a particular job. For example, a 'spokesperson' is someone who speaks or issues statements on behalf of a **particular** organization; a 'chairperson' is someone who chairs a **committee**.

-person is often used instead of '-man' or '-woman' in order to avoid specifying what sex somebody is.

Her spokesperson told me that about ten manuscripts arrive each day.

The chairperson asked for volunteers to participate in the various subcommittees.

...his decision to speak to no newsperson.

Here is a list of words with **this** meaning:

chairperson	newsperson	ombudsperson	spokesperson
-------------	------------	--------------	--------------

Note that words formed in **this** way are seldom used in the plural, but when they are they combine with **-persons** rather than **-people**.

The members of The Advisory Council include sixty chairpersons of smaller councils.

2 Numbers

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-person** combines with numbers to form words which describe how many people a particular object or activity is intended for. For example, a 'twelve-person' caravan is one that has enough room and beds for twelve people to sleep in; a 'four-person' game is played by four people.

...a four-person self-catering holiday flat.

...a £63-a-week pay claim for driving one-person operated trains.

...two-person board games such as chess and draughts.

For more information on words that refer to people, see **-folk**, **-kind**, **-man**, **-people**, and **-woman**.

-phile

-phile

-phile occurs in nouns which refer to or describe someone who likes a particular place or thing very much. For example, a 'Francophile' is someone who has a great liking for and admiration of France and the French people; a 'bibliophile' is someone who likes books very much.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

Anglophile bibliophile Europhile Francophile Italophile

-phobia, -phobic

-phobia occurs in nouns and **-phobic** occurs in adjectives which have 'fear' or 'dread' as part of their meaning. For example, if someone suffers from 'agoraphobia', they are afraid of open spaces and dislike leaving their home; if someone is 'claustrophobic', they have a fear of being in small, narrow, or enclosed places.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

agoraphobia	claustrophobic	technophobia
agoraphobic	homophobia	xenophobia
claustrophobia	hydrophobia	xenophobic

phon-

phon- occurs in words which have 'sound' or 'voice' as part of their meaning. For example, 'phonology' is the study of speech sounds in a particular language; a 'phoneme' is one of the possible speech sounds in a language.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

phoneme	phonetics	phonograph
phonetic	phonic	phonology

-phone

-phone occurs in words which refer to instruments which produce, amplify, or transmit sound. For example, the 'telephone' is an electrical instrument that makes it possible for you to talk to someone else in a different place; a 'saxophone' is a musical instrument played by blowing and pressing keys.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

dictaphone	megaphone	telephone
earphone	microphone	vibraphone
gramophone	saxophone	xylophone

-piece

-phone is also used as an abbreviation of 'telephone' and it occurs in words which have this as part of their meaning. For example, an 'answerphone' is a machine that answers the telephone and records messages.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

answerphone	cellphone	payphone
carphone	freephone	

photo-

photo- occurs in words which indicate that something relates to or is produced by light. For example, a 'photograph' is a picture made when light falls onto a film in a camera.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

photocell	photograph	photosensitive
photochemical	photokinesis	photosynthesis

photo- is also used as an abbreviation of 'photograph' and it occurs in words which have photography as part of their meaning. For example, a 'photocopier' is a machine that quickly copies documents by photographing them.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

photocopier	photofit	photo-journalist
photocopy	photogenic	photo-novel

physio-

physio- occurs in words which have 'physical' as part of their meaning. For example, 'physiology' is the study of the way the bodies of people and animals function; 'physiography' is another name for physical geography.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

physiography	physiotherapist
physiology	physiotherapy

-piece

1 Numbers

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-piece** combines with numbers to form words which describe the number of members or pieces in a particular

-piece

group. For example, a 'forty-two-piece' dinner service is made up of forty-two plates, cups, saucers, and so on.

My sitting room has a three-piece suite and a desk.

... two-piece dresses.

...her one-piece swimming costume.

2 Use or position

-piece combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something which is part of a larger object and which serves a particular purpose or is situated in a particular position. For example, an 'eyepiece' is part of something that you put near your eye to look through; a 'side-piece' is located at the side of a larger object.

The cameraman peered into the eyepiece.

The centrepiece of the picture was a representation of the King.

It was on the stone slab beneath the chimney-piece.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

altar-piece
centrepiece

chimney-piece
earpiece

eyepiece
mouthpiece

side-piece

Note that 'mouthpiece' and 'centrepiece' both have another common meaning. The 'mouthpiece' of an organization is the person who publicly states their policies and opinions. The 'centrepiece' of a set of things is something that you show as the best example of that set.

Words with other meanings

frontispiece mantelpiece masterpiece showpiece

politico-

politico- combines with adjectives to form new adjectives which describe something which involves politics. For example, a 'politico-religious' ideal involves both political and religious concerns; if a country or group of countries is subject to 'politico-economic' domination, it is controlled and influenced, both politically and economically, by another country or group of countries.

Note that adjectives formed in this way are fairly formal and occur infrequently.

...a politico-religious ideal as old as Christianity itself.

The politico-administrative systems had different characteristics.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

politico-administrative
politico-economic

politico-military
politico-religious

politico-strategic

post-

poly-

poly- occurs in words which have 'many' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'polygon' is a geometrical shape with three or more straight sides; 'polyphonic' music is made up of many different parts and melodies.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

polyglot	polygraph	polyphonic	polytechnic
polygon	polyhedron	polyphony	polytheism
polygram	polymath	polysyllabic	

-poor

-poor combines with nouns to form adjectives which describe something that does not have enough of a desirable or valuable substance. For example, if food is 'nutrient-poor' it is a bad source of nutrients; if soil is 'nitrogen-poor', it does not contain enough nitrogen.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **-poor** to nouns, particularly if they refer to chemical or organic substances. However, words formed in this way are not very common and they are normally used in formal language, for example in books and articles on subjects of scientific interest.

...nutrient-poor, permanently waterlogged pastures.

...a foul, oxygen-poor atmosphere.

...resource-poor countries.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

nitrogen-poor	oxygen-poor	sulphur-poor
nutrient-poor	resource-poor	

post-

1 After

PRODUCTIVE USE: **post-** combines with nouns and adjectives which refer to or describe a particular event or development in order to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way indicate that one thing takes place after another. For example, a 'post-election' survey is conducted after an election has taken place; a 'post-feminist' movement is based on ideas which developed out of the original feminist movement.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a

post-

hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...the post-election confusion.

...the post-ceremony luncheon.

We live in a post-religious era.

Public confidence has fallen dramatically, according to a post-budget poll.

...an instant post-race reaction.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

post-budget
post-ceremony
post-election
post-examination
post-feminist
post-Freudian
post-impressionism

post-independence
post-liberation
post-Marxist
post-match
post-medieval
post-menopausal
post-modernism

post-natal
post-race
post-religious
post-renaissance
post-structuralism

post- also combines in this way with dates.

...post-1960's society.

He began to study some of the post-sixth-century portraits.

2 Postal services

post- also combines with nouns to refer to something that is connected with the postal service. For example, a 'postman' is someone who delivers letters and parcels; a 'postcode' is a code or short sequence of letters and numbers at the end of an address which makes sorting mail easier.

The postman handed me my letters through the window.

Mary sent her husband many postcards and one real letter from Istanbul.

A post-box in Rome is emptied, on average, every three days.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

postbag
post-box
postcard

postcode
postman
postmark

postmaster
postmistress
post-office

post-service

Words with other meanings

postgraduate

postscript

pre-

1 Before

PRODUCTIVE USE: **pre-** combines with nouns and adjectives which refer to or describe a particular event or development in order to

pre-

form words which are used in front of nouns. Words formed in this way describe one thing that takes place before another. For example, a footballer might suffer from 'pre-match' nerves before playing a football match; you have a 'pre-dinner' drink just before you eat dinner.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

For more information on words that have 'before' as part of their meaning, see **ante-**.

The squad will go to Shaw Hill for pre-match training.
He found himself opposing Chamberlain in the pre-war years.
...pre-industrial Britain.
...pre-job education or training schemes.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

pre-adolescent	pre-examination	pre-reformation
pre-birth	pre-game	pre-retirement
pre-budget	pre-glasnost	pre-revolution
pre-capitalist	prehuman	pre-Roman
pre-Christian	pre-independence	pre-school
pre-Christmas	pre-industrial	pre-transmission
pre-dawn	pre-lunch	pre-trial
pre-delivery	premarital	pre-war
pre-dinner	pre-match	
pre-election	pre-race	

pre- combines in this way with dates.

More than eighty pre-1939 sports cars took part in the rally.
...information extracted from pre-fourteenth century documents.

pre- also combines in this way with verbs to form new verbs. For example, if you 'prejudge' a situation, you form an opinion about it before you know all the facts.

Party organizations inevitably prejudge proposals from their opponents.

He married late and his wife predeceased him.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

pre-date	predetermine	prejudge
predecease	prefigure	preview

2 Already

PRODUCTIVE USE: **pre-** also combines with nouns and past participles to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe an action which has already been done. For

pre-

example, a 'preconception' is a belief that you already have about something before you know enough about it to form a fair opinion of it; if something is 'prepaid', it has already been paid for.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

He tries to deny information which challenges his preconceptions.

Fuel was provided at pre-arranged stores along the routes.

The door of his study was open, and without premeditation he turned into it.

Cover the dish and bake in a preset oven.

The food is pre-prepared but not pre-cooked.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

pre-arranged	predestination	premeditation	pre-planned
pre-booked	predestined	preordained	pre-prepared
preconceived	pre-digested	preordination	pre-recorded
preconception	prefabricated	pre-packed	pre-selected
pre-cooked	pre-heated	pre-paid	pre-selection
pre-cut	premeditated	pre-payment	preset

Words with other meanings

preamble	predominate	prehistoric	prepossessing
precaution	pre-eminent	prejudice	prerequisite
predispose	pre-empt	premature	presentiment
predominant	prefix	preoccupy	pretext

pro-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **pro-** combines with nouns and adjectives which refer to or describe a person, system, philosophy, or policy in order to form words which describe someone or something that strongly supports the person or thing mentioned. For example, if someone is 'pro-democracy', they support democracy; if a magazine is 'pro-feminist', it contains articles which support feminism.

Demonstrators carrying pro-democracy banners.

...a pro-government rally outside the Presidential Palace.

...the prospect of a pro-Western country on its borders.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

pro-allies	pro-conservation	pro-monarchy
pro-authority	pro-democracy	pro-nationalist
pro-business	pro-exercise	pro-nuclear
pro-capitalist	pro-family	pro-union
pro-choice	pro-feminist	pro-West
pro-church	pro-government	pro-Western
pro-communist	pro-liberal	

-proof

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-proof** combines with nouns which refer to things which might be considered harmful or undesirable in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something that cannot be harmed or that is unaffected by a particular thing. For example, if clothing is 'waterproof', it does not let water pass through it; if a dish is 'ovenproof', it can be used in an oven without being damaged by the heat.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

*A pair of waterproof trousers will prevent a wet backside.
...secure from random snipers behind my bullet-proof windows.
The film tins were stacked ceiling high in the two fireproof store rooms.
The camp in the woods was well sheltered and storm-proof.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

accident-proof	fireproof	leakproof	storm-proof
bullet-proof	flameproof	ovenproof	vandal-proof
burglar-proof	foolproof	rainproof	waterproof
child-proof	frost-proof	rot-proof	weatherproof
damp-proof	greaseproof	rust-proof	windproof
dishwasherproof	heatproof	shower-proof	
dust-proof	inflation-proof	soundproof	

-proof occasionally combines with verbs to form adjectives which indicate that something is resistant to a particular action.

The shatterproof windows had held up to the attack.

proto-

proto- combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to something which comes from the early stages in the development of a particular thing. For example, a 'prototype' is the first model that is made of something, usually the basis for later improved models; a 'proto-fascist' was an influential member of the early fascist movement whose ideas were used as the basis for later developments.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen with the exception of 'prototype', which is written as one word.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words with this meaning by adding **proto-** to nouns, particularly if they refer to things

proto-

which have developed in some way, such as animals or plants. However, words formed in this way are not very common and they are normally used in formal language, for example in books and articles on subjects of scientific interest.

...the building and testing of prototype cars and engines.

...without jaws, the proto-fish could not prey upon shelled molluscs.

...protohumans who lived one-and-a-half million years ago.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

proto-coalition
proto-fascist

proto-fish
proto-horse

protohuman
protoplanet

prototype

pseudo-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **pseudo-** combines with nouns and adjectives in order to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something which is not really what it seems or claims to be. For example, if a building is 'pseudo-rustic', it does not come from the countryside but is designed to look as if it does.

pseudo- is often used to show disapproval. For example, if you describe someone as a 'pseudo-friend', you think that although they appear to be friendly they are not genuinely your friend.

...a pretty, pseudo-rustic bistro.

He undid his coat and slung it over the back of a pseudo-oak settee.

...pseudo-modern patterns and plain colours.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

pseudo-creativity
pseudo-democratic
pseudo-fact
pseudo-friend
pseudo-literary

pseudo-metal
pseudo-military
pseudo-modern
pseudo-natural
pseudo-noble

pseudo-oak
pseudo-parent
pseudo-religious
pseudo-rustic
pseudo-science

psych-

psych- occurs in words which have 'mind' or 'mental processes' as part of their meaning. For example, 'psychiatry' is the branch of medicine concerned with the study and treatment of mental illness; a 'psychopath' is someone who is mentally disturbed with the result that they often do very violent or destructive things.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

psychiatrist
psychiatry
psychic

psychoanalysis
psychoanalyst
psychological

psychology
psychopath
psychotic

radio-

quad-

quad- occurs in words which indicate that something has four parts. For example, a 'quadrilateral' is a geometrical shape with four straight sides; a 'quadruped' is an animal with four legs.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

quadrangle	quadriceps	quadrilateral	quadruped
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quasi-

quasi- combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe a person or thing that is almost, but not quite, the thing described by the adjective. For example, a 'quasi-academic' book is written in the style of an academic book but its content is not considered to be properly academic; a 'quasi-religious' experience is almost, but not quite, the same as a religious experience.

PRODUCTIVE USE: It is possible to form new words by adding **quasi-** to adjectives. However, words formed in this way are fairly formal or literary and do not occur frequently.

...academic and quasi-academic literature.

...a mystical or quasi-religious experience.

...quasi-human automation.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

quasi-academic	quasi-human	quasi-military
quasi-attractive	quasi-industrial	quasi-moderate
quasi-autonomous	quasi-judicial	quasi-moral
quasi-diplomatic	quasi-legal	quasi-official
quasi-divine	quasi-magical	quasi-religious

quasi- occasionally combines in this way with nouns.

They have turned their countries into quasi-republics.

radio-

radio- occurs in words which have 'radiation' or 'radio waves' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'radioactive' substance produces energy in the form of radiation; a 'radio-telescope' is an instrument which receives radio waves from space and uses them to find the position of stars.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

radioactive	radiogram	radio-telescope
radio-car	radiography	radio-transmitter
radiocarbon	radio-operator	
radio-controlled	radio-telephone	

re-

re-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **re-** combines with verbs and their related nouns to form new verbs and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to the fact that an action or process is done or happens a second time, sometimes in a different way. For example, if you 'rewrite' something, you make changes to something you have already written in order to improve it; if a person or thing 'reappears', they appear again after previously disappearing or being away; if a person or thing makes a 'reappearance', they reappear.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen, especially when **re-** combines with a word that begins with a vowel.

...a comedy well worth re-reading.

...Grosvenor Road, now renamed Millbank.

The theatre was founded in 1720, but rebuilt in 1820.

...a re-examination of the purposes of education.

...the redistribution of government spending.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

re-allocate	recreate	re-examine	reopening
re-allocation	recreation	refreeze	repossess
reappear	redefine	regenerate	repossession
reappearance	redefinition	regeneration	reprint
rebuild	rediscover	remarriage	re-read
reconsider	rediscovery	remarry	re-reading
reconsideration	redistribute	rename	restart
reconstruct	redistribution	renaming	reunite
reconstruction	re-examination	reopen	rewrite

Note that 'rewrite' and 'reprint' can be used as either verbs or nouns and that 'recreation' also has another meaning and is listed below.

Words with other meanings

react	release	reserve
reactor	relive	resignation
reassure	remark	resolution
rebound	remove	resolve
recollection	repay	resort
recommendation	replace	restore
recover	represent	restrain
recreation	reproduce	retirement
recycle	reproduction	retrace
redress	reprove	retreat
reform	research	return
relay	reservation	review

-related

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-related** combines with nouns to form adjectives that describe one thing as being connected with another. For example, if tax is 'income-related', the amount of tax someone pays is linked to the size of their income; if a project is 'school-related', it is connected with school.

...a campaign for income-related Family Credit.

He spent a lot of time away as a result of job-related travel.

The benefits for children were age-related.

The project could create 120,000 new City-related jobs.

...extensive limitations on tobacco-related advertising.

Words formed in this way are often used to describe the cause of an illness or accident. For example, if a disease is 'smoking-related', it is caused by smoking cigarettes.

...the threat of lung and other smoking-related cancers.

...the toll from drink-related road accidents.

...a high incidence of drug-related crimes.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

age-related	drink-related	job-related	smoking-related
alcohol-related	drug-related	leisure-related	stress-related
career-related	earnings-related	oil-related	tax-related
city-related	income-related	race-related	tobacco-related
disaster-related	injury-related	school-related	work-related

retro-

retro- occurs in words which have 'back' or 'backwards' as part of their meaning. For example, if a decision is 'retroactive', it is intended to take effect from a date in the past; if you form an opinion about something in 'retrospect', you look back on it and base your opinion on what actually happened.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

retroactive	retrograde	retrogressive	retrospective
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-rich

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-rich** combines with nouns to form adjectives.

Adjectives formed in this way describe things which contain a large amount or high concentration of whatever the nouns refer to. **-rich** is often used in this way with nouns which refer to chemical or organic substances. For example, if a food is 'fibre-rich', it contains

-rich

a high amount of fibre; if something is 'energy-rich', it is a good source of energy.

Note that words formed in this way are fairly formal; they usually occur in books or articles on subjects of scientific interest.

...fibre-rich foods, such as wholemeal bread, cereals, and vegetables.

...sacks of protein-rich groundnuts.

The big buyers have been cash-rich companies and investment trusts.

...carbon-rich compounds.

...chocolates, sweet drinks, and other sugar-rich foods.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

asset-rich
carbon-rich
cash-rich
energy-rich
fat-rich

fibre-rich
information-rich
lead-rich
mineral-rich
nitrate-rich

nutrient-rich
oil-rich
oxygen-rich
phosphate-rich
protein-rich

resource-rich
rubber-rich
species-rich
sugar-rich
vitamin-rich

-ridden

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ridden** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that suffer from a large or excessive amount of something unpleasant or unwanted. For example, if someone is 'guilt-ridden', they are suffering so much from guilt that it affects the way they behave; if a country or culture is 'class-ridden', it is affected by the class system in many unpleasant and restrictive ways.

...his cold, overwrought, guilt-ridden childhood.

...a sprawling tension-ridden slum.

This served only to cause further confusion in a rumour-ridden Peking.

...the flood- and cyclone-ridden islands of the Ganges delta.

...a filthy, mouse-ridden jail.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bullet-ridden
class-ridden
cliche-ridden
cyclone-ridden
debt-ridden
disease-ridden

draught-ridden
drought-ridden
fear-ridden
flood-ridden
guilt-ridden
lice-ridden

maggot-ridden
mouse-ridden
penalty-ridden
plague-ridden
priest-ridden
rumour-ridden

scandal-ridden
storm-ridden
strike-ridden
tension-ridden
terror-ridden
vermin-ridden

Russo-

Russo- occurs in words which have 'Russian' or 'Russia' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'Russo-Japanese' war was fought between Russia and Japan.

-scape

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-scape** combines with nouns that refer to a particular feature in the physical world to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the view of an area which is characterized by that feature. For example, a 'landscape' is a view of a particular area of land; a 'waterscape' is a landscape containing a large area of water, such as a river or lake. Words formed in this way can also be used to refer to paintings of these areas.

*The Clee Hills dominate a landscape where the soil is red.
The dusty moonscape lay before them, glimmering in the earthlight.
...a little townscape of roofs and chimneys.
The riverscape has a weird and romantic starkness.
...a deep blue seascape showing three yachts making their way among rocks.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

cityscape	landscape	riverscape	skyscape	starscape
cloudscape	moonscape	roofscape	snowscape	townscape
lakescape	mudscape	seascape	spirescape	waterscape

self-

1 Actions done to or by yourself

PRODUCTIVE USE: **self-** combines with nouns to form new nouns or with past and present participles in order to form adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe actions that people do to or by themselves. For example, 'self-government' is the government of a country by its own people rather than by another country; someone who is 'self-taught' has learnt a subject on his or her own.

*...the desire for self-government and independence.
Single children are always intensely self-absorbed.
They took up karate partly for self-protection and partly to keep fit.*

self-

...a self-service petrol station.
...a four-person self-catering holiday flat.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

self-absorbed
self-analysis
self-appointed
self-approval
self-awareness
self-catering
self-control
self-criticism
self-deception
self-defeating
self-defence
self-denial

self-discipline
self-doubt
self-educated
self-employed
self-expression
self-government
self-hate
self-help
self-image
self-imposed
self-indulgence
self-inflicted

self-interest
self-knowledge
self-love
self-management
self-pity
self-portrait
self-preservation
self-protection
self-reliance
self-restraint
self-service
self-taught

self- also combines with present participles to form adjectives and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to an object, especially a machine, that performs an action automatically. For example, a 'self-locking' door is a door that locks itself automatically without needing a key; a 'self-loading' gun reloads itself automatically after firing a bullet.

He closed the self-locking flat door behind him.
...a self-winding watch.
...a self-cleaning oven.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

self-cleaning
self-destruction

self-heating
self-locking

self-propelled
self-regulating

self-starting
self-winding

Note that 'self-destruct' is a verb formed from the noun 'self-destruction'. If something 'self-destructs', it destroys itself, often in a violent way, for example by blowing itself up.

2 Attitudes

self- also combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives that refer to or describe how people feel about themselves. For example, if someone is 'self-confident', they are very confident of their own ability and judgement; if someone is 'self-opinionated', they believe very firmly that their own ideas or opinions are right.

She was remarkably self-confident and dependable for her age.
He addressed the Board with his usual self-assurance.

semi-

Patrick is self-conscious about his thinness.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

self-assertive	self-conscious	self-possession
self-assertiveness	self-esteem	self-respect
self-assurance	self-importance	self-respecting
self-assured	self-important	self-righteous
self-confidence	self-opinionated	self-satisfaction
self-confident	self-possessed	self-satisfied

Note that words formed in this way also often combine with '-ly' to form adverbs.

Words with other meanings

self-addressed	self-evident	self-styled
self-centred	self-explanatory	self-sufficiency
self-confessed	selfish	self-sufficient
self-contained	selfless	self-will
self-determination	self-made	self-willed
self-effacement	self-same	
self-effacing	self-serving	

semi-

1 Describing something only partly true

PRODUCTIVE USE: **semi-** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe something that almost happens or is only partly true. For example, if a place is in 'semi-darkness', it is almost but not entirely dark; if someone is 'semi-retired', they have not completely retired but still work occasionally.

They stared forward into the semi-darkness of the undergrowth.

There is an enormous demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour.

The semi-liquid clay is then called 'slip'.

He was back in Glasgow again, this time on a semi-permanent basis.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

semi-automatic	semi-divine	semi-mystical	semi-precious
semi-conscious	semi-human	semi-naked	semi-retired
semi-dark	semi-invalid	semi-official	semi-skilled
semi-darkness	semi-liquid	semi-organic	semi-soft
semi-derelict	semi-literate	semi-permanent	semi-synthetic

semi- also occasionally combines with verbs to form other verbs. For example, if someone 'semi-smiles', they smile slightly. Verbs formed in this way do not occur very often and should be used only with extreme care.

semi-

2 Half

semi- also combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way express the idea that something is equal to one half of something else. For example, a 'semicircle' is one half of a circle, or something that has the shape of half a circle; a 'semi-annual' event happens every half year.

The Romans always made the arch as a semicircle.

The musicians were afraid of missing a single semi-quaver.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

semi-annual	semicircular	semi-quaver
semicircle	semi-detached	semi-tone

For more information on prefixes that mean 'half', see **demi-** and **half-**.

Words with other meanings

semi-colon	semiconductor	semiology	semiotics
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-ship

1 Occupation and position

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ship** combines with nouns that refer to people in a particular occupation or position in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the state or experience of having that occupation or position. For example, 'ownership' is the state of being the owner of something; the 'editorship' of a newspaper or magazine is the position and status of its editor.

Kenya has encouraged the development of private land ownership.
Mitterrand has just taken over the chairmanship of the European Community.

He applied for the rectorship of Upton-on-Severn.

She concealed her authorship to ensure fair criticism of her work.

He was offered a professorship in mathematics.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ambassadorship	deanship	leadership	professorship
apprenticeship	directorship	lectureship	proprietorship
authorship	doctorship	librarianship	rectorship
chairmanship	editorship	membership	stewardship
chancellorship	governorship	ownership	studentship
citizenship	headmastership	premiership	traineeship

2 Skills and ability

-ship also combines with nouns that refer to people with a particular job or occupation in order to form new nouns. Nouns

-ship

formed in this way refer to the skill those people use when doing the job or occupation referred to. For example, 'marksmanship' is the ability to shoot a gun accurately; 'statesmanship' is the skill and ability a statesman needs to carry out his duties.

His room bore plentiful evidence of his marksmanship in the form of stuffed animals.

England set a high standard of sportsmanship.

The workmanship of the dresses was unmistakably French.

It was a marvellous example of oarsmanship.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

craftsmanship	marksmanship	salesmanship	sportsmanship
draftsmanship	musicianship	seamanship	statesmanship
horsemanship	oarsmanship	showmanship	workmanship

3 Connections

-ship combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to a relation between two or more people and things. For example, a 'friendship' is the relationship between two or more people who are friends; 'companionship' is the state of having a companion rather than being alone.

That evening a strong friendship between the two women began.

...a cosy new relationship between the two countries.

The overwhelming mood was one of comradeship.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

acquaintanceship	friendship	relationship
companionship	kinship	
comradeship	partnership	

4 Boats and other vehicles

-ship combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to types of boats or other vehicles. For example, a 'battleship' is a large boat or ship intended for use in military combat; a 'spaceship' is a vehicle which can travel in space.

...the remains of a sunken battleship.

He set sail on the troopship Cameronia from Glasgow to South Africa.

...watching Earth's first spaceship setting off for the moon.

...an overaged, obsolete steamship.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

airship	flagship	spaceship	troopship
battleship	gunship	steamship	warship

-ship

Words with other meanings

censorship
championship
courtship

dictatorship
hardship
ladyship

lordship
readership
scholarship

sponsorship
township

-side

1 The edge of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-side** combines with nouns that refer to a place or object in order to form words which refer to the edge of the place or object mentioned. For example, the 'riverside' is an area on or near the bank of a river; a 'fireside' chair is a chair next to a fire.

...the relative cool of the riverside vegetation.

...sobbing bitterly at the graveside.

A bus took us to a lakeside hotel in Queenstown.

We stopped for lunch by the roadside.

She drank a tumbler of Perrier from the bedside cabinet.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bedside
deskside
dockside
fireside
graveside

hearthside
hillside
kerbside
lakeside
mountainside

oceanside
parksides
poolsides
quayside
ringside

riverside
roadside
seaside
trackside
waterside

2 Part of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-side** combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to that part of something that involves or is described by the original nouns and adjectives. For example, the 'passenger-side' of a car is the opposite side to where the driver sits; the 'hinge-side' of a door is the edge to which the hinges are attached.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...leaning over, she opened the door of the passenger-side.

He stood in the corner by the door and the left-side wall.

...digging top quality meadow turves and stacking them, grass-side down.

He mashed out the butt of his cigar against the underside of the table.

-size, -sized

The palm-side of his clenched fist beat down on the opponent.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

earthside	hingside	openside	southside
farside	innerside	palm-side	underside
grass-side	lee-side	passenger-side	upperside
greenside	left-side	right-side	weather-side
headside	northside	sand-side	

Words with other meanings

alongside	blind-side	legside	outside	subside
aside	broadside	nearside	preside	upside
backside	countryside	offside	reside	wayside
beside	inside	onside	stateside	

Sino-

Sino- occurs in words which have 'Chinese' or 'China' as part of their meaning. For example, the 'Sino-Soviet' border is the border between China and Russia.

-sion

See **-ion**.

-size, -sized

1 The same size as something else

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-size** and **-sized** combine with nouns to form adjectives that describe one thing as being approximately the same size as another. For example, if a house is 'mansion-size', it is almost as big as a mansion; if a photograph is 'postcard-sized', it is approximately the same size as a postcard. **-size** and **-sized** have exactly the same meaning when they are used in this way but **-sized** is slightly more common. Many nouns can be used with either **-size** or **-sized**.

Note that the adjectives formed with the noun 'man' are an exception to this general rule. For example, if something is described as 'man-sized', it is roughly the same size as a man; if something is described as 'man-size', it is suitable for use by a man. See also paragraph 2.

...a mansion-size rectory.

...horrificing photographs in poster-sized enlargements.

-size, -sized

*There was a heavy splash as a man-sized alligator left the bank.
...a teaspoon-size mound of peas.
The lemur is cat-sized, with soft grey fur.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

apple-sized	cottage-size	mansion-size	postcard-sized
button-sized	doll-size	man-sized	poster-sized
cat-sized	envelope-sized	mouse-sized	room-size
child-sized	farm-size	page-size	stamp-size
city-size	finger-size	pea-sized	teaspoon-size
coin-sized	fist-sized	pin-size	wall-size

2 Suitability for a particular purpose

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-size** also combines with nouns to form adjectives that describe something as being a suitable size for a particular purpose. For example, if a packet of soup is described as 'family-size', it is meant to be big enough to feed a whole family; if a photograph is 'passport-size', it is the right size to stick in your passport.

Note that **-sized** is not usually used with this meaning.

*... two large family-size packets of soup.
We are trying to get child-size brooms.
The size and clarity of a pocket-size screen is usually unsatisfactory.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

adult-size	family-size	passport-size	snack-size
child-size	man-size	pocket-size	

3 Describing the size of something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-size** and **-sized** combine with adjectives that indicate size in order to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way give more specific information about the size of a particular object. For example, if something is 'jumbo-size', it is extremely large; if a model is 'full-sized', it is the same size as the thing it represents.

*...jumbo-size fountain pens.
...an average-sized family of six.
The peeling door opened into a fair-sized room.
...a medium-size city.
...giant-size tins of soup.*

-some

Here are some examples of words with this meaning formed with **size**; most of them can also be formed with **sized**:

average-size	good-size	middle-size	ordinary-size
fair-size	jumbo-size	mid-size	single-size
full-size	large-size	moderate-size	small-size
giant-size	medium-size	normal-size	standard-size

Words with other meanings

king-size	outsize
life-size	pint-size

socio-

socio- occurs in words which have 'social' or 'society' as part of their meaning. For example, 'sociology' is the study of human societies and of the relationships between groups in these societies; 'socio-economic' questions involve both social and economic factors.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

sociobiology	socio-industrial	socio-political
socio-economic	sociolinguistic	socio-psychological
socio-historical	sociological	

-some

1 Attributes and characteristics

-some combines with nouns and verbs to form adjectives. The adjectives formed describe the characteristics and attributes of people and occasionally things. For example, if someone is 'quarrelsome', they are always quarrelling with people; if someone or something is 'bothersome', they are annoying or irritating.

...he becomes impossibly quarrelsome and abusive, even violent.
... a loathsome, dark, evil thing.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

adventuresome	flavoursome	meddlesome
bothersome	loathsome	quarrelsome
burdensome	lonesome	venturesome

2 Causing an emotion

-some combines with nouns, verbs, and adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe a person or thing that causes someone to feel a particular emotion, usually an

-some

unpleasant one. For example, if something is 'worrisome', it makes people worry; if a person or thing is 'troublesome', they cause annoying problems or difficulties.

*The destruction of your radio is a serious and worrisome affair.
To Kunta, lions were fearsome, slinking animals that would tear apart a goat.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

awesome	irksome	troublesome	worrisome
fearsome	tiresome	wearisome	

3 Groups

-some combines with small numbers such as 'two', 'three', or 'four' to form nouns that refer to a group containing that number of people, usually when they are doing something together.

*We decided to make the attempt as a threesome.
I was glad to see him on the beach when our foursome wandered onto it.*

Words with other meanings

chromosome	noisome	wholesome
handsome	toothsome	winsome

-speak

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-speak** combines with nouns, and especially people's names, to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the language in which a particular subject is discussed or to the way that someone characteristically speaks. For example, 'lawyer-speak' is the obscure legal language often used by lawyers; 'Woolf-speak' refers to the way Virginia Woolf typically uses language.

*...anyone wanting advice, and who didn't understand lawyer-speak.
...that unique language known as computer-speak.
Students soon learn to recognise teacher-speak.
The novel contains many examples of Woolf-speak.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

computer-speak	marketing-speak
consumer-speak	media-speak
lawyer-speak	teacher-speak

step-

step- combines with nouns such as 'brother', 'parent', and 'child' to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the members of

-style

a family in which one or more of the adults has been married more than once. For example, a woman's 'stepdaughter' is the daughter of her husband by a previous marriage; someone's 'stepfather' is the man who has married their mother after the death or divorce of their natural father.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

*She was never out of the company of her stepdaughters.
The children were staying with Betty's stepmother in Glasgow.
...Margaret Burnham's stepbrother Bob.*

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

stepbrother	stepdaughter	stepmother	stepsister
step-children	stepfather	step-parent	stepson

-stricken

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-stricken** combines with nouns that refer to an unpleasant emotion or experience in order to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that are very badly affected by such emotions or experiences. For example, if you are 'panic-stricken', your panic is so great that you are unable to control it; if a country is 'famine-stricken', it is affected by a very bad shortage of food.

*The slightest suspicion of danger and they freeze, panic-stricken.
The great majority of poverty-stricken people live in rural areas.
When Roosevelt died Hearst was grief-stricken.
The quiet of the store was suddenly pervaded by a subdued but fear-stricken tension.
He was immediately horror-stricken at what he'd done and shot himself.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

awe-stricken	grief-stricken	panic-stricken	terror-stricken
famine-stricken	guilt-stricken	plague-stricken	
fear-stricken	horror-stricken	poverty-stricken	

-style

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-style** combines with nouns and adjectives to form words which describe something that resembles or is characteristic of the thing referred to or described by the original noun or

-style

adjective. For example, a 'Victorian-style' dress is similar to those worn by Victorian women; if food is cooked 'American-style', it is made in the same way as American food and is supposed to look and taste like it.

She was dressed in a long, Victorian-style dress.

Greece is a big producer of oriental-style tobaccos.

He still wore his old-style suits.

She was sitting Indian-style on the floor.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

African-style	bungalow-style	Hollywood-style	old-style
American-style	commando-style	Indian-style	Russian-style
antique-style	English-style	military-style	Tokyo-style
baroque-style	European-style	modern-style	Tudor-style
British-style	French-style	Moscow-style	US-style
buffet-style	German-style	new-style	Victorian-style

Words with other meanings

freestyle hairstyle life-style

sub-

1 Gradation

PRODUCTIVE USE: **sub-** combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things that are secondary or less important examples of whatever is referred to by the original nouns. For example, a 'sub-committee' is a small committee whose members come from a larger and more influential committee; a 'sub-contractor' is a person or firm that has a contract to do a small part of a job which another firm is responsible for.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

...the Parliamentary defence committee's sub-committee on low flying aircraft noise.

Supporters succeeded in forming a sub-party within the party.

The police said that crime had fallen in the subdivision covering the city centre.

sub-

In the Indian subcontinent the monsoon is awaited with hope and trepidation.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

sub-agent	sub-contractor	sub-paragraph	substructure
sub-branch	subculture	sub-party	sub-system
sub-centre	subdepartment	sub-plot	subtenant
sub-chief	subdivision	subsection	sub-text
sub-class	sub-editor	subset	sub-total
sub-committee	sub-group	sub-species	subtype
subcontinent	sub-heading	sub-station	subvariety

Note that **sub-** occasionally combines in this way with verbs. For example, if you 'subdivide' something, you divide again something that has already been divided.

The group may then be divided and subdivided.

I lived for three years nearly rent-free by subletting rooms to friends.

Mintech increasingly subcontracted its civil programme to the private sector.

2 Beneath

sub- combines with nouns, adjectives, and occasionally verbs to form new nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Words formed in this way refer to or describe things that are beneath or lower down than something else. For example, a 'submarine' is a ship that can travel under the sea, as well as on its surface; a 'subterranean' river flows underground.

A submarine lying still on the seabed stands a good chance of not being noticed.

...mermaid princesses reclining on rocks in sub-aquatic settings.

The boat was sinking. The stern was completely submerged, and the bow was rising.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

sub-aquatic	submarine	subsea	subterranean
sub-basement	submerge	subsoil	subtitle
subcurrent	suboceanic	sub-surface	subway

3 Lesser

sub- combines with nouns and adjectives to form new nouns and adjectives. Words formed in this way refer to or describe people or things that are inferior, smaller, or less powerful than whatever is referred to or described by the original nouns and adjectives. For example, if goods are 'substandard', they fail to meet a required standard and are therefore unacceptable; if a plane flies at a 'subsonic' speed, it travels slower than the speed of sound.

sub-

Substandard civil engineering costs more in lives than it saves in materials.

...a woman who was clearly educationally subnormal.

...the subhuman conditions of the jails.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

subfertile	sub-humid	subsonic	sub-zero
sub-freezing	sub-literacy	substandard	
subhuman	subnormal	subteenage	

Note that **sub-** occasionally combines with adjectives and nouns to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that unsuccessfully imitate a particular style or way of doing something. For example, a 'sub-Tennysonian' style of writing resembles Tennyson's poetry, but is not as good.

The ideas they sought to embody were far too highbrow for my sub-Tennysonian style.

He spoke in a generalized sub-Cockney whine.

4 Power and control

sub- also occurs in nouns, adjectives, and verbs which express the idea that one person or thing exerts power over or controls another. For example, if soldiers 'subdue' a group of people, they gain control over them, usually by force; if someone is 'submissive', they do whatever other people want them to.

The troops were sent to subdue the tribesmen.

The trade union movement is not prepared to be subservient to any movement.

...the subjugation of the interests of the working class.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

subdue	subjugation	submissive	subordinate
subject	sublimate	submit	subservient

Note that 'subject' can also be a noun with another meaning and is in the list below.

Words with other meanings

subconscious	subscribe	subsidize	subterfuge
subject	subscription	substance	subtract
subjective	subsequent	substantial	suburb
subjunctive	subside	substitute	subversive
sublime	subsidiary	subsume	subvert

super-

1 Degree

PRODUCTIVE USE: **super-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that the quality described is present in an unusually large degree. For example, if something is 'superabundant', it is present in extremely large quantities; if someone is 'super-intelligent', they are extremely intelligent.

super- also combines with the adverbs and nouns that are related to the original adjectives.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

*I would choose this plant for its superabundant flowers and fruits.
Haemoglobin is super-efficient at the task of carrying oxygen.
...a miniaturized, super-cheap, highly reliable computer.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

superabundant
super-active
supercharged
super-cheap
super-clever
superconductor
super-conscious
super-dominant
super-efficient

superfine
super-fluidity
super-friendly
superheated
super-heavy
super-hygienic
super-intelligent
superintense
supermodern

super-precious
super-quick
super-rich
supersaturated
super-secure
super-sensitive
super-simplification
supersophisticated
super-speed

2 Size, power, and ability

PRODUCTIVE USE: **super-** combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to a bigger, more powerful, or more important version of a particular thing. For example, a 'supermarket' is a very big shop selling many different goods; a 'supertanker' is a very large ship able to carry a large amount of cargo; a 'superpower' is a country whose military forces are very strong.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

*...the Vatican supermarket, brim-full of food at subsidized prices.
...the rise of Japan as an economic, financial and technological
superstate.
...the application of the power of the super-computers towards
advancing medical science.*

super-

...a super-union with more than two million members.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

super-athlete	super-hero	super-ministry	superstate
superbrain	superhighway	super-organism	superstore
super-computer	super-leader	superpower	supertanker
supercontinent	superman	super-species	super-union
super-genius	supermarket	superstar	superwoman

3 Beyond

super- combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that go beyond the limits of what the original adjectives usually describe. For example, a 'supersonic' aircraft is one which travels faster than the speed of sound; if something is 'superhuman', it is beyond the powers or experiences of a normal person. **super-** also combines with the adverbs, nouns, and verbs that are related to the original adjectives.

...the hazards of flying such aircraft at supersonic speeds.

Pep pills produce supernormal alertness.

...the supernatural contrivance of an angel descending from heaven.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

superhuman	supernatural	supersonic
supernational	supernormal	

Words with other meanings

superannuated	superfluous	supernumerary	supertax
supercilious	superimpose	supersede	supervise
superego	superintend	superstition	
superficial	superlative	superstructure	

sur-

sur- occurs in words which have 'over', 'above', or 'excess' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'surcharge' is a charge which is made as well as the usual amount, often as a tax or penalty; a 'surplus' of something is more of it than you need.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

surcharge	surmount	surplus
surfeit	surpass	surreal

sym-, syn-

sym- and **syn-** occur in words which have 'with', 'together', or 'similar' as part of their meaning. For example, if something is

tele-

'symmetrical', its two halves are mirror images of each other; a 'synthesis' of different ideas is a mixture of these ideas in which they blend together; if you 'synchronize' two actions, you do them at the same time.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

symbiosis	sympathy	synchronize	synonym
symmetrical	symphony	syndicate	synthesis

techn-

techn- occurs in words which have 'skill', 'craft', or 'art' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'technician' is someone whose job involves skilled practical work with scientific equipment; 'technology' is the study or use of scientific knowledge for practical purposes in industry.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

technical	technician	technique	technology
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Note that **techno-** is also used as an abbreviation of 'technology' and it occurs in words which have technology as part of their meaning. For example, a 'technocentric' society is one that depends on technology and uses it a great deal.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

technocentric	technocracy	technomania	technosociety
technochemical	technocrat	technophobe	technostructure

tele-

tele- occurs in words which express the idea that something is distant or that something happens over a distance. For example, a 'telephone' is an electrical device which transmits speech so that you can talk to someone who is in a different place; 'telecommunications' is the technology of sending signals and messages over long distances using electrical equipment.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

telecommunications	telepathy	telescope
telecommuter	telephone	televise
telegram	telephoto	television
telegraph	teleprinter	

Note that **tele-** is also sometimes used as an abbreviation of either

tele-

'telephone' or 'television'. For example, 'telesales' is a method of selling goods by telephone; a 'telecast' is a television broadcast.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

telecast telesales teletext

theo-

theo- occurs in words which have 'god' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'theocracy' is a society which is ruled by priests who represent a god; a 'theologian' is someone who studies the nature of God and the relationship between God and human beings.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

theocracy theological theology theosophy

thermo-

thermo- occurs in words which have 'heat' as part of their meaning. For example, a 'thermometer' is an instrument for measuring temperature; a 'thermostat' is a control which automatically keeps a heating system at a constant temperature.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

thermochemical thermoelectric thermonuclear thermostat
thermodynamic thermometer thermopollution thermotherapy

-tion

See -ion.

-to-be

-to-be combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things or people that will become whatever the original nouns describe. For example, a 'mother-to-be' is a woman who is pregnant and about to become a mother; a 'husband-to-be' is a man who has decided to get married but hasn't yet done so.

The mother-to-be arrives for her regular obstetrical check-ups.

...the brilliant emperor-to-be Justinian, who subsequently reigned from 527 to 565 AD.

'I don't know when I'll meet him,' Miss Yoo Ok Soon said of her husband-to-be.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bride-to-be husband-to-be parents-to-be
emperor-to-be mother-to-be wife-to-be

trans-

PRODUCTIVE USE: This is not a particularly common use but new words can be formed by adding **-to-be** to nouns.

...the roofbeams of the house-to-be.

...the technological arrangements of the society-to-be.

Note that **-to-be** also combines with 'soon' and 'never' to form adjectives.

The soon-to-be widow did not comprehend that her husband would die.

...the never-to-be astronauts.

too-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **too-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way refer to things that have more of the quality described than is useful or desirable.

The too-easy availability of credit has a moral impact.

To drill his seed on too-cold ground was to have it rot, or the birds get it.

...the too-familiar list of economic difficulties.

...the shock of his too-blond hair.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

too-blond	too-easy	too-late	too-much
too-clean	too-familiar	too-literal	too-placid
too-close	too-high	too-long	too-rapid
too-cold	too-intimate	too-loud	too-rigid
too-desperate	too-large	too-massive	too-tight

trans-

1 Moving from one side of something to the other

PRODUCTIVE USE: **trans-** combines with nouns and adjectives that refer to or describe a place in order to form words which describe something that goes across the place mentioned. For example, the 'trans-Siberian' railway is a railway that crosses Siberia; a 'transatlantic' flight is a flight that goes from one side of the Atlantic to the other.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

...then to Vladivostok and via the Trans-Siberian railway to Moscow.

...a relentless attempt to delay the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

trans-

...last year's Carlsberg singlehanded transatlantic race.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

trans-Alaska	transatlantic	trans-Siberian
trans-Amazonian	transcontinental	trans-world
transAmerica	transoceanic	

There are two other groups of words which are similar in meaning to those explained above but in which **trans-** combines with stems which are not current words in English.

The first group contains nouns and verbs that refer to or describe the process by which something goes from one place to another. For example, if you 'transport' something, you take or send it from one place to another.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

transceiver	transit	transmit	transpose
transfer	transmigration	transplant	
transfusion	transmission	transport	

The second group of words contains nouns and adjectives that refer to or describe the process by which one thing crosses or goes through another. For example, if something is 'transparent', it allows light to pass through it and you can see through it.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

transept	transparency	transpiration
translucent	transparent	transverse

2 Totally changing

trans- also occurs in words which refer to or describe the process by which something completely changes its shape or form. In this meaning, **trans-** often combines with stems that are not current words in English. For example, if you 'translate' something, you change it from one language into another; if you 'transform' something you totally change its appearance.

Translation and simultaneous interpretation will be done by machines.

The transition to a war footing had gone very smoothly.

The transcript of grand jury hearings is sealed.

...Shakespeare with his obsession with transsexual heroines.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

transcribe	transition	transmute
transcript	translate	transsexual
transcription	translation	transubstantial
transform	transliteration	transubstantiation
transformation	transmogrify	transvestite

-ular

Words with other meanings

transaction
transcend
transcendent

transfix
transgression
transhipment

transient
transistor
transitivity

transitory
transnational
transpire

tri-

tri- occurs in words which indicate that something has three parts. For example, a 'trilogy' is a series of three related books by the same author which have the same subject or characters; a 'triplet' is one of three babies born at the same time to the same mother.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

triangle
tridentennial
tricolour
tri-continental

tricycle
trilateral
tri-level
trilogy

tripartite
triple
triplet
triplicate

tripod
triptych
trisyllabic
triumvirate

-type

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-type** combines with nouns and adjectives to form words which describe something that is similar to or typical of the thing referred to by the original noun or adjective. For example, a 'Swedish-type' house is a house similar to those built in Sweden; 'academic-type' work is work you do on academic subjects at school or university, as opposed to other kinds of work.

It was a long wooden Swedish-type house which looked almost black.

Traces of the hormone-type weedkillers can wreak havoc on sensitive crops.

...a typical five-seat, executive-type car.

...the plain lenses of his schoolboy-type glasses.

Day nurseries are often run by a hospital-type matron.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

academic-type
Burmese-type
church-type
European-type

executive-type
gothic-type
hormone-type
hospital-type

military-type
police-type
rail-type
schoolboy-type

snack-type
Swedish-type
war-type
Western-type

-ular

-ular combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe things that involve or are characterized by whatever the nouns refer to. For example, if someone is 'muscular',

-ular

they have well-developed muscles; if something such as sugar is 'granular', it is made up of lots of granules. Words formed in this way are fairly formal and are used more commonly in written English than in spoken English.

His shoulders were broad and muscular.

...a Nobel Prize winner in the field of molecular biology.

Most of the roads were still impassable to vehicular movements.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cellular	curricular	modular	valvular
consular	glandular	molecular	vehicular
corpuscular	granular	muscular	ventricular

-ular also combines with nouns that refer to shapes in order to form adjectives that describe things with that shape. For example, if something is 'circular', it is shaped like a circle; if something is 'rectangular', it is in the shape of a rectangle.

...a large circular pool of very clear water.

I found him at an angular desk in a room full of busy-looking journalists.

Bear Island is triangular in shape, with its apex to the south.

...special tubular tyres.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

angular	globular	rectangular	triangular
circular	quadrangular	tabular	tubular

Words with other meanings

avuncular	jocular	perpendicular	singular
binocular	jugular	popular	spectacular
insular	particular	regular	vernacular
irregular	peninsular	secular	

ultra-

PRODUCTIVE USE: **ultra-** combines with adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that the qualities described are true or present to a very large degree. For example, if someone is 'ultra-intelligent', they are extremely intelligent; if something is 'ultra-modern', it is very modern or up-to-date.

... the intellectual power of ~~com~~puters and Ultra-Intelligent Machines.
...an ultra-light plastic pot ~~con~~taining tablets.
They delight in her exuberant, ultra-feminine wit.
The family plods on generation ~~or~~ after generation, ultra-conservative.
27 organizations signed a ~~warr~~ing of the 'enormous damage' ultra-orthodox legislation would ~~have~~.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

ultra-cautious	ultra-intelligent	ultra-rich
ultra-civilized	ultra-left	ultra-secret
ultra-clean	ultra-light	ultra-sensitive
ultra-conservative	ultra-low	ultra-sharp
ultra-English	ultra-modern	ultra-smart
ultra-fast	ultra-orthodox	ultra-smooth
ultra-feminine	ultra-pious	ultra-sophisticated
ultra-high	ultra-powerful	ultra-tiny

ultra- also sometimes combines with nouns to form other nouns that refer to an extreme version of something.

Shintoism gave a religious basis for Japanese ultra-nationalism and ultra-militarism.
Women excel in the ultra-distance events where they sometimes beat many of the men.

Words with other meanings

ultramarine	ultrasound	ultraviolet
ultrasonic	ultrastructure	

un-

1 With adjectives, adverbs, and nouns

un- combines with adjectives and their related nouns and adverbs to form new adjectives, nouns, and adverbs. Words formed in this way describe or refer to things that are the opposite of whatever the original adjectives, adverbs, and nouns describe or refer to. For example, if someone finds something 'unacceptable', they think it is not acceptable; if someone is 'unfortunate', they have bad luck and unpleasant experiences as opposed to good fortune.

What they have to tell us may be intellectually shocking or emotionally unacceptable.

un-

...an uneven or rough surface.

He detested and, if he could, avoided personal unpleasantness.

Hargreaves, unwillingly, felt drawn to Melmotte in his isolation.

Here is a list of adjectives with this meaning:

unable	unconscious	unhappy	unpleasant
unacceptable	uncooperative	unharmonious	unpredictable
unalive	undemocratic	unhelpful	unrealistic
unalterable	uneatable	unintelligent	unremarkable
unaware	unemotional	unkind	unsafe
unbelievable	unemployed	unlucky	unsuccessful
unbiased	unfair	unmusical	untidy
uncertain	unfaithful	unnatural	unusual
unclean	unfortunate	unnecessary	unwell
uncomfortable	ungentlemanly	unofficial	unwilling

Here is a list of nouns and adverbs with this meaning:

unacceptability	unfairly	unpleasantness
unacceptably	unfairness	unpredictability
unalterability	unfortunately	unpredictably
unalterably	unhappily	unrealistically
unbelievability	unhappiness	unsuccessfully
unbelievably	unhelpfully	untidily
uncertainly	unhelpfulness	untidiness
uncertainty	unluckily	unusually
uncomfortably	unnaturally	unwillingly
unconsciously	unofficially	unwillingness
undemocratically	unpleasantly	

PRODUCTIVE USE: **un-** can combine with almost any adjective or noun but the words formed are often unusual and are used for emphasis or contrast. They should be used with extreme care.

...your shocked and horrified unbelief.

...an act of the greatest uncharity, the very negation of the spirit of kindness.

The other girl had suddenly gone un-brave and confessed all.

2 With participles

un- combines with participles to form adjectives which express the idea that something has not happened or is not true. For example, if someone is 'unbeaten' at something, no-one has beaten them yet; if someone is described as 'unsmiling', they are not smiling.

...Lennox Lewis, the unbeaten young heavyweight who is looking for a British title bout.

The passage contains my unrehearsed and largely unprepared remarks.

...their peaceful, undemanding co-existence.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

unaltered	unexamined	unloving	unsmiling
unbeaten	unexcavated	unneeded	unstamped
unbuilt	unexpected	unoffending	unswallowed
uncaring	unfinished	unorganized	untaught
uncarpeted	unflattering	unpainted	untested
unchanging	unharmful	unprecedented	untrusting
uncivilized	unhesitating	unprepared	unuttered
undamaged	uninterrupted	unprinted	unventilated
undemanding	uninviting	unread	unwritten
undisturbed	unloved	unrehearsed	unyellowing

Adjectives formed in this way can be used to form -ly adverbs.

For more information on -ly adverbs, see -ly.

Captain Imrie accepted the judgement as unhesitatingly as if an oracle had spoken.

He stared at me unblinkingly.

3 With verbs

un- combines with verbs to form new verbs. Verbs formed in this way express the idea that the process or state referred to by the original verb is reversed. For example, if you 'undress', you take off the clothes you are dressed in; if you 'uncover' something, you remove whatever was covering or hiding it.

Let him help to dress and undress himself.

Whatever is now covered up will be uncovered.

I unlocked the padlock and opened the lid.

He reached into the lunch bag and took out the second sandwich and unwrapped it.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

unbend	uncrease	unleash	unplug	untether
unclasp	undo	unlock	unroll	untie
unclip	undress	unmake	unscrew	untwist
uncover	unlearn	unpack	unseal	unwrap

For more information on prefixes with a negative meaning, see **de-**, **dis-**, **il-**, and **non-**.

Words with other meanings

undue	unless	unnerv	until	unto
-------	--------	--------	-------	------

under-

under-

1 Insufficient

PRODUCTIVE USE: **under-** combines with verbs, nouns, and past participles to form new verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Words formed in this way express the idea that there is not enough of something or that something has not been done as much or as well as is needed. For example, if you describe something as 'underdeveloped', you think it has not been developed enough; if you 'underestimate' someone or something, you think they are smaller, less powerful, or less capable than they really are.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

The problems of the underdeveloped world will remain intractable.
The hospitals were seriously under-financed.
While over-indulging in eating, they also under-indulge in exercise.
He was an undergrown boy, thin, with a long pale face.
...the measured understatement of true professional geographers.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

under-capacity	under-indulge	undersize
underdeveloped	under-manned	understaffed
underemployed	undernourished	understatement
under-equipped	underpay	undersubscribed
underestimate	underprepared	under-trained
under-exercised	underpriced	under-use
under-financed	under-production	undervalue
undergrown	under-rehearsed	underweight

2 Beneath

PRODUCTIVE USE: **under-** also combines with nouns and verbs to form words which refer to or describe things that are beneath something else or that happen below something else. For example, if something is 'underground', it is below the surface of the ground; if you 'underline' a piece of writing, you draw a line beneath it; your 'underclothes' are the clothes you wear next to your skin under your other clothes.

It was a long way down, for Alex's office was one floor underground.
A propagator is an enclosed glass box with soil in it and under-soil electric heating.
I put on the clothes but not the underwear.
...under-glass cultivation.

under-

He underlined his signature with a little flourish.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

underarm	underfoot	underlit	under-soil
underbelly	under-glass	underpass	undersurface
underblanket	underground	underscore	underwater
undercarriage	undergrowth	undersea	underwear
underclothes	underline	underside	
underfloor	underlip	undersigned	

3 Numbers

PRODUCTIVE USE: **under-** combines with numbers to form nouns and adjectives. Nouns formed in this way are always used in the plural form and refer to people who are younger than the age mentioned. For example 'under-fives' are children who are younger than five years old. Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that are younger or smaller than the age or size that those numbers refer to. For example, if you are playing in an 'under-twenty-one' sports team, you are aged twenty or less.

They offer educational day care for two hundred under-fives.

The under-twenty-ones have their sights on the under-twenty-one World Cup.

4 Rank

under- combines with nouns that refer to people's jobs in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to people who have a lower rank or status than someone else. For example, an 'undergraduate' is a student who has not yet graduated and who is studying for his or her first degree; an 'under-gardener' is a gardener who is supervised by a head gardener.

The age range of undergraduate college students is eighteen to twenty-two.

Who's Who invites civil servants of the rank of under-secretary or above to submit biographies.

He returned as assistant under-librarian at the University Library.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

under-butler	under-gardener	under-secretary
under-class	undergraduate	underservant
under-dairymaid	under-librarian	undersheriff
under-footman	under-manager	

Words with other meanings

undercover	undergo	underpin	undertaker
undercurrent	underhand	understand	undertone
undercut	underlie	understudy	underworld
underdog	undermine	undertake	underwrite

uni-

uni-

uni- occurs in words which have 'one' or 'single' as part of their meaning. For example, if something is 'unique', it is the only one of its type; a 'unisex' hairdresser is a single shop that is used by both men and women.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

uniform	unilateral	unique	unite
unify	union	unisex	unity

up-

1 Direction or position

up- combines with nouns and verbs to form words which describe or refer to a person or thing that is moving towards, or is situated in, a higher or more remote place or position. For example, if you go 'uphill', you climb a slope or hill; 'upland' places are situated on high hills, plateaus, or mountains; you describe a place as 'up-country' when it is farther north, farther inland, or more remote than the place you are in.

...a side-street that led uphill quite steeply.

There were plenty of side roads leading away into the hills and the upland villages.

He advised that torpedo boats be brought upriver.

He plans to straighten the upstairs, clean the downstairs, and scrub the kitchen floor.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

up-country	uphill	upside	upstretched
up-current	upland	upstage	upthrust
updraught	upriver	upstairs	upwards
upfield	uprush	upstream	upwind

2 Increase or improvement

up- combines with verbs and occasionally nouns to form new verbs and nouns. Words formed in this way describe or refer to the process by which something increases or changes and improves. For example, if you 'upgrade' something, you change it so that it becomes more important and better in quality; if you 'update' something, you improve it by making it more modern.

The district manager had wanted to upgrade staff who worked unsupervised.

Computers can update their own software and acquire new programs for themselves.

...a sudden upsurge of fatherly compassion.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

update	uprate	upsurge	upturn
upgrade	upscale	uptrend	

3 Disturbance

up- also combines with verbs and nouns to form new verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Words formed in this way describe or refer to some sort of disturbance, trouble, or confusion. For example, if you 'upset' something, you knock it over, if you 'upset' a person, you make them unhappy, and if you 'upset' a process or procedure, you cause it to go wrong; an 'uprising' is a revolt or rebellion.

He almost upset the canoe in his struggle to leap overboard.

Belinda was looking hurt and upset.

Davis's death has upset our routine.

The forest near them burst into uproar.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

upended	uprising	uproar	uproot	upset
---------	----------	--------	--------	-------

Words with other meanings

upbeat	upfront	upkeep	upshot
upbraid	upheaval	uplift	upstanding
upbringing	uphold	upmarket	uptake
upcoming	upholstery	upright	uptight

-ure

-ure combines with verbs to form nouns that refer to the action or state described by the verb. For example, 'departure' is the act of going away or departing from somewhere; 'composure' is the state of being calm, unworried, and composed.

Just before the departure from Aden, fierce fighting broke out.

The meeting was a failure.

Helen was struggling hard to keep her composure.

...the closure of the Suez Canal.

...an illegal seizure of property.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

closure	disclosure	failure	portraiture
composure	enclosure	forfeiture	procedure
curvature	expenditure	mixture	sculpture
departure	exposure	pleasure	seizure

-ure

Words with other meanings

adventure	figure	leisure	picture
architecture	fixture	legislature	pressure
creature	furniture	literature	signature
culture	future	moisture	structure
feature	gesture	nature	temperature

vice-

vice- combines with nouns describing ranks or titles to form new nouns that describe ranks or titles that are less important than the first. For example, a 'vice-president' holds a position second only to the president; the 'vice-captain' of a sports team is next in importance to the captain.

George Washington and John Adams were president and vice-president.

Captain Illingworth and vice-captain Cowdrey were at a loss. ...the positions of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

vice-admiral	vice-consul	vice-presidency
vice-captain	vice-governor	vice-president
vice-chairman	vice-minister	vice-principal
vice-chairwoman	vice-premier	vice-provost

video-

video- occurs in words whose meaning includes 'televised pictures'. For example, a 'video-recorder' is a machine that records television programmes onto a 'video-tape' so that people can watch these programmes at some later time on a television set.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

video-cassette	video-recorder
video-coach	video-tape

-ward, -wards

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-ward** and **-wards** combine with nouns and adverbs of direction to form words which describe the direction in which something is moving or facing. For example, if someone faces 'westward', they face the west; if something moves 'downwards', it moves from a higher position to a lower one.

Note that words formed with **-ward** can usually be used as either

-ware

adverbs or adjectives; words formed with **-wards** are mainly used as adverbs.

He was shading his eyes, looking westward.

The ship sank off St Helena in 1612 on its homeward journey.

The child screwed up his eyes, and looked intently skywards.

He reached for the accelerator lever and pushed it upwards.

He sometimes made a downward beat with his raised right fist.

Sweet-smelling smoke swirled ceiling-ward.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

backward	eastwards	onward	skywards
backwards	floorward	onwards	southward
ceiling-ward	floorwards	outward	southwards
ceiling-wards	homeward	outwards	upward
downward	homewards	seaward	upwards
downwards	inward	seawards	westward
earthward	inwards	shoreward	westwards
earthwards	northward	shorewards	
eastward	northwards	skyward	

Note that 'inward' and 'outward' also have meanings which are not connected with moving or facing in a particular direction. They are used to describe the inside or the outside of something, especially someone's thoughts and feelings or their appearance and expressions.

...an expression of pain and inward concentration.

'Yes, of course I'll stay,' I said with outward calm.

Words with other meanings

afterward	forward	steward	untoward
afterwards	leeward	toward	wayward
coward	reward	towards	windward

-ware

-ware combines with nouns, adjectives, and occasionally verbs to form nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things that are made of a particular substance, have particular qualities, or are intended for a particular use. For example, 'brassware' refers to objects made of brass; 'kitchenware' refers to objects such as pans and cooking utensils which are intended for use in the kitchen.

...the beauty of the Kashmiri carpets and old brassware.

Huge chinaware pots overflowed with pink camellias.

-ware

...Bullers, the fine arts and giftware group.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

brassware	copperware	giftware	kitchenware
chinaware	dinnerware	glassware	silverware
coarseware	earthenware	houseware	stoneware
cookware	fineware	iron-ware	tableware

Note that 'hardware' and 'software' are computer terms; 'hardware' refers to the machinery of the computer and 'software' refers to the programs that are written for it. 'Hardware' can also refer to the tools and equipment used in the home and garden.

well-

1 Describing something good

PRODUCTIVE USE: **well-** combines with past participles to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that the things or people they describe have attributes which are pleasing or useful or that something has been done successfully. For example, if you describe someone as 'well-behaved', they behave in a way you approve of; if a house is 'well-built', it has been built to a high standard; if a person is 'well-built', they are strong, physically fit, and healthy.

You always seemed so neat and clean and well-behaved.

...a well-balanced, good-looking upright position.

A well-designed office is a place where people are comfortable and work well.

Biko was tall and well-built, with pleasant features.

...a series that was well-written, finely directed, and well-acted.

The four of them were highly intelligent, well-trained, and qualified women.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

well-acted	well-built	well-furnished	well-preserved
well-adjusted	well-chosen	well-kept	well-qualified
well-arranged	well-cut	well-made	well-timed
well-balanced	well-designed	well-nourished	well-trained
well-behaved	well-dressed	well-organized	well-understood
well-bred	well-educated	well-prepared	well-written

well- is also used with this meaning to form the noun 'well-being' which refers to good health, pleasure, and a sense of worth in someone's life.

2 Amount or degree

PRODUCTIVE USE: **well-** also combines with past participles to form adjectives which express the idea that there is a large amount of something or that something has been done a great deal. **well-** can also be used to show that the qualities the adjectives describe are particularly intense or extreme. For example, if a person or fact is 'well-known', it is known by a lot of people; if something is 'well-chewed', it has been chewed many times.

...anyone who is rich and well-known.

...a cloth-capped miner in his well-worn corduroy trousers.

They worked like a well-oiled machine.

...the well-established principle of family life.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

well-attended	well-deserved	well-known	well-respected
well-beaten	well-drained	well-lit	well-scrubbed
well-battered	well-earned	well-loved	well-travelled
well-chewed	well-established	well-matured	well-tried
well-corseted	well-hidden	well-oiled	well-ventilated
well-covered	well-impressed	well-populated	well-worn

The explanations given in paragraphs 1 and 2 are connected. In some words the meaning they have depends on the context in which they are used; for example, if you talk about a 'well-cooked' meal, you mean it has been cooked skilfully and that it tastes nice, but if you describe cabbage as 'well-cooked' you mean it has been cooked for a long time and perhaps cooked for too long. In certain other words the two meanings overlap; for example, if an event has been 'well-publicized', it has been publicized successfully but it has also been widely publicized and a lot of people know about it.

Here is a list of words with both meanings:

well-armed	well-fed	well-paid
well-charted	well-financed	well-publicized
well-cooked	well-grown	well-read
well-defined	well-guarded	well-rehearsed
well-developed	well-informed	well-stocked
well-documented	well-insulated	well-watered
well-equipped	well-marked	

3 Friendliness or sympathy

well- combines with participles to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that someone feels friendly or sympathetic to someone else. For example, if you do something which is 'well-intentioned', or are described as 'well-meaning', you wish to be useful, helpful or kind. **well-** also sometimes combines with this meaning with nouns to form new nouns. For example, a

well-

'well-wisher' is someone who feels favourably towards another person or thing and wishes them success.

Well-disposed people are amused by it. Others can be offended.

...the possibility of doing harm by well-intentioned efforts.

Many of the tasks performed by well-meaning officials could be much better done by self-reliant local communities.

The fine eighteenth-century iron gates were given by an American well-wisher.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

well-disposed	well-meaning	well-received	well-wisher
well-intentioned	well-meant	well-regarded	

Words with other meanings

well-heeled	well-off	well-spring	well-versed
well-nigh	well-sinkers	well-to-do	

-wide

1 Extent

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-wide** combines with nouns that refer to a place, area, or organization. Words formed in this way express the idea that something exists or happens throughout the whole of that place, area, or organization. For example, a 'worldwide' problem affects everybody in the world; a 'company-wide' pay rise applies to everybody who works for a particular company.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

The demonstration attracted worldwide media coverage.

...offering nationwide a 24 hour weather channel.

...the 1976 EEC-wide survey on people's attitudes to poverty.

A campus-wide rally was being organized.

A community-wide law would prove difficult to enforce.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

area-wide	continent-wide	nationwide	society-wide
campus-wide	countrywide	planet-wide	state-wide
city-wide	EEC-wide	population-wide	system-wide
company-wide	industry-wide	religion-wide	worldwide

2 Measurement

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-wide** combines with any unit of distance to form adjectives that describe the width of something.

-wise

I used to lie on the foot-wide parapet that ran round the top of the house.

...two-metre-wide lengths of silk.

...a three-inch-wide strip of flexible formica.

-wise

1 Similarity

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-wise** combines with nouns to form words which describe actions or states that are similar to those of the people or things referred to by the nouns. For example, if something moves 'clockwise', it moves in a circle and in the same direction as the hands of a clock.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written with a hyphen, but some of the more common ones are written as one word.

The wheel periodically spun clockwise as if of its own accord.

He came striding past swaying sailor-wise in his walk.

Face your crisis and don't hide your head in the sand, ostrich-wise.

He clenched his fist and beat hammer-wise on the wall at his right.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

clockwise

crab-wise

hammer-wise

machine-wise

monkey-wise

ostrich-wise

sack-wise

sailor-wise

slantwise

sleepwalker-wise

star-wise

step-wise

2 With regard to something

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-wise** combines with nouns, and occasionally adjectives and adverbs. Words formed in this way express the idea that something is true with regard to, or in connection with, the specific thing or quality originally referred to. For example, if you describe yourself as socialist 'vote-wise', you vote socialist but are not actively involved in politics; if an athlete's performance in a race is bad 'time-wise', he or she may have come high up in the finishing order but in a slower time than they hoped for.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

We are mostly Socialists, vote-wise, and that's about all.

'It's not good, caloriewise, to have a high starch intake,' she said.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays are a bit restricted, menu-wise.

-wise

Time-wise, I was about eight hours behind England.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

caloriewise	drinkwise	percentage-wise	status-wise
colour-wise	menu-wise	picture-wise	time-wise
comfort-wise	newswise	socially-wise	vote-wise

Note that words formed in this way are informal and some speakers consider that they are not good English.

Words with other meanings

crosswise	likewise	penny-wise	worldly-wise
lengthwise	otherwise	streetwise	

-woman

-woman combines with nouns to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to women who do a particular job or who come from a particular place. You use **-woman** when you want to refer specifically to women rather than to men or people in general. For example, an 'Irishwoman' is a woman who comes from Ireland; a 'barwoman' is a woman who works in a pub or bar serving drinks.

It is a political statement, which does not lose its force when the Irishman or Irishwoman travels or lives abroad.

Clare Francis is a novelist and former yachswoman.

Sylvia was a clever needlewoman and made all her own clothes.

As a true countrywoman, she bottles and preserves all the things that grow in her garden.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

barwoman	countrywoman	helmswoman	saleswoman
businesswoman	craftswoman	horsetwoman	Scotswoman
careerwoman	Dutchwoman	Irishwoman	spokeswoman
chairwoman	Englishwoman	needlewoman	sportswoman
cleaning-woman	Frenchwoman	policewoman	yachswoman

For more information on words referring specifically to women, see **-ess**. For more information about words referring to people in general, see **-folk**, **-kind**, **-man**, **-people**, and **-person**.

-work

1 Showing what something is made of

-work combines with nouns that refer to a substance or material in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to things

-work

made of that substance or material. For example, 'ironwork' refers to things such as gates or balconies made from iron in a decorative and skilful way; a 'wickerwork' chair is made of wicker.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common ones can be written with a hyphen.

I am always on the look-out for ornamental ironwork.

...fat wickerwork armchairs with feathery cushions.

Some new brickwork showed where two extra rooms had been added.

...jobs such as washing down paintwork, and cleaning ceilings.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

brasswork	lacework	pipework	stonework
brickwork	leatherwork	plasterwork	threadwork
cement-work	metalwork	scrollwork	tilework
crochet-work	paintwork	silverwork	wickerwork
ironwork	pastrywork	steelwork	woodwork

Note that **-work** can also be used in this way to show the form of something. For example, 'latticework' is any structure that is made in the form of a lattice; 'basketwork' refers to baskets and other objects woven from wicker and cane.

They went to a table far down the room, behind a latticework screen.

...little basket-work tables with tops of ice-green glass.

...two-storey stone dwellings, all displaying iron grillwork on their balconies.

2 Activities

-work also combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to what you do with the things indicated by the original noun. For example, 'footwork' is the way in which you move your feet, especially in sport or dancing; 'paperwork' is the part of a job which involves dealing with papers, such as accounts, bills, or letters.

Anticipation and nimble footwork enabled her to keep rallies going.

He must do some paperwork before going to bed.

The camerawork wasn't bad for students.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

bookwork	camerawork	legwork	paperwork
brainwork	footwork	metalwork	video-work
brushwork	lathe-work	needlework	woodwork

3 Tasks

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-work** also combines with nouns to form new nouns that refer to tasks which are related to the thing named. For

-work

example, 'schoolwork' is the work that a child does at or for school; 'housework' is work done in the house such as cleaning and washing.

*She does well in her schoolwork, and works extremely hard.
The men shared all housework, including washing and ironing.
The examiners will take account of the course-work done by candidates.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

casework	homework	schoolwork
classwork	housework	speech-work
course-work	management-work	wage-work
groupwork	model-work	

4 A type of job

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-work** also combines with nouns that refer to a place of work, a time, or a particular system in order to form new nouns. Nouns formed in this way refer to the kind of job someone does. For example, 'shop-work' is work done in a shop; 'shiftwork' is the system by which different people work different shifts.

Spelling: Words formed in this way can be written with a hyphen or as one word.

*He had become less and less satisfied with shop-work.
In Sweden the unions have tried to have shiftwork banned.
Many families have been ruined through nightwork.
They look upon farmwork as something inferior.*

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

day-work	nightwork	practical-work	show-work
desk-work	office-work	saleswork	store-work
dockwork	pitwork	shiftwork	
farmwork	police-work	shop-work	

Words with other meanings

artwork	fieldwork	handiwork	part-work	teamwork
bodywork	firework	masterwork	patchwork	waxwork
clockwork	framework	network	piece-work	
craftwork	groundwork	openwork	spadework	
earthwork	guesswork	overwork	speedwork	

-worthy

1 Assessment of worth

PRODUCTIVE USE: **-worthy** combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe people or things that

-wright

deserve or merit whatever the nouns refer to. For example, if someone is 'trustworthy', they are reliable and responsible and can be trusted completely; if something is 'newsworthy', it is interesting or important enough to be reported on news programmes or in newspapers.

Spelling: Words formed in this way are usually written as one word, but some of the less common words can be written with a hyphen.

She is well-balanced, hard working and trustworthy.
I can hardly remember one right decision, one praiseworthy action.
He hadn't done anything applause-worthy yet.
We will, if we think you are creditworthy, give you a loan.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

applause-worthy	newsworthy	stageworthy
award-worthy	noteworthy	trustworthy
creditworthy	praiseworthy	
headline-worthy	respect-worthy	

2 Vehicles

-worthy also combines with nouns to form adjectives that describe vehicles which are in a good condition and are safe for travelling.

Once their craft was seaworthy again it was escorted out of the protection zone.
They then certified N-731-TA as completely airworthy.
...a car that he had lovingly re-painted and tinkered with to make it road-worthy.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

airworthy	roadworthy	seaworthy	trackworthy
-----------	------------	-----------	-------------

-wright

-wright occurs in nouns that refer to people who create, build or repair something. For example, a 'playwright' is a person who writes plays; a 'cartwright' is someone who makes and repairs carts.

Here is a list of words with this meaning:

cartwright	playwright	wainwright
millwright	shipwright	wheelwright

-y

-y

1 Characteristics

PRODUCTIVE USE: -y combines with nouns to form adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way express the idea that something or someone is similar to or is characterized by the thing the noun refers to. For example, if something is 'dirty', it is covered with dirt; a 'smoky' room is one that is full of smoke.

Spelling: A final 'e' is replaced by '-y'. If a word of one syllable ends in a 'b', 'd', 'g', 'n', or 't' preceded by a single vowel, the 'b', 'd', 'g', 'n', or 't' is doubled before adding '-y'.

Castle saw a stack of dirty dishes in the sink.

Horse-drawn sleds slithered across the snowy streets.

The back of the cab was dusty with cigarette ashes.

...feathery trees on pink stone hills.

Here are some examples of words with this meaning:

bloody	dusty	hairy	sexy	stringy
blotchy	fatty	itchy	sketchy	stumpy
bulky	feathery	leafy	smoky	sunny
bushy	flowery	mighty	sneaky	thirsty
cloudy	foggy	muddy	snowy	tinny
dirty	grassy	rainy	stoney	worthy

2 Colour

PRODUCTIVE USE: -y combines with colour adjectives to form new adjectives. Adjectives formed in this way describe something which is approximately that colour, or that has that colour in it. When words formed in this way are followed by another colour, they indicate the particular shade of that second colour. For example, if a flower is 'pinky' purple, it is a shade of purple that is quite similar to pink.

Note that -y is not used with 'white' or 'black'.

...borders of pinky purple tulips.

...shortish, yellowy black hairs.

The peaks were already turning plummy maroon.

He turned a funny colour, a kind of greeny purple.

3 Affectionate names

PRODUCTIVE USE: -y also combines with almost any noun or name in order to give it a more affectionate or familiar form. These words are often used by children, by adults when they are talking to children, or when someone wants to express affection. Words formed in this way are very informal.

-y

'I'll find out for you, Janey.'

'Where is your father, Danny? Can I speak to him?'

Sam wanted me to take him to see the birdies in the park.

'Give the ball to the doggy, John.'

Words with other meanings

cagey	handy	lofty	savoury	tiny
cheeky	hardy	murky	scanty	touchy
corny	heady	musty	seedy	wary
crafty	hearty	naughty	shifty	weary
dreamy	horny	phoney	steady	
dumpy	husky	puny	stocky	
earthy	jaunty	roomy	stuffy	

Note that not all words ending in -y are adjectives; -y also occurs in some common nouns.

Exercises

1 Forming nouns

A The suffixes in the following list combine with nouns and verbs to form new nouns that refer to **people** or professions. Look at the list of nouns. Write down the noun or verb from which they have been formed in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

SUFFIX	VERB/NOUN	NOUN FORMED
-ant	<i>defend</i>	defendant
	assistant
-ee	trainee
	addressee
-ess	actress
	princess
-er	driver
	painter
-ian	historian
	musician
-ist	novelist
	scientist
-or	supervisor
	visitor

B Each of the sentences below contains a word printed in bold. Complete each sentence by using this word to form a noun which refers to a person who does a particular thing. Write down the answer in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

- If you are **employed** by a company, you are one of its
..... *employee* s
- A is someone whose job is **politics**.
- A woman who works as a does the same job as a **waiter**.
- The s in a discussion are the people who **participate** in it.
- The person who **conducts** an orchestra or choir is called the
.....

- 6 Your is the person who **teaches** you.
- 7 A is someone who earns their living by playing the **piano**.
- 8 If someone **examines** you, you are the and he or she is the

C The suffixes in the following list are used to form nouns that refer to an activity, a process, or a state or condition. Look at the list of nouns formed from them. Write down the noun, verb, or adjective from which they have been formed in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

SUFFIX	VERB/NOUN/ ADJECTIVE	NOUN FORMED
-al	<i>arrive</i>	arrival
-ance	abundance
-cy	constancy
-dom	kingdom
-ence	independence
-ful	mouthful
-hood	boyhood
-ing	dancing
-ion	invention
-ism	criticism
-ity	sensitivity
-ment	agreement
-ness	happiness
-ship	ownership

D Read the following short story. Write down the correct noun in the space provided beneath the story using the words in **bold** to help you. The first one has been done for you.

Whilst at college, I remember listening to a lecture given by a rather pompous (1) who was discussing the values of strong (2) in politics. Firstly he presented his (3) of (4), then continued by arguing that (5) by a political leader was a positive attribute as resolute decisions could be made but that the basic (6) in society could still be maintained. He felt strongly that schools did not provide the kind of (7) needed for the development of good leadership qualities which should be instilled from

early (8). He felt also that *modern* society encouraged qualities such as (9) and (10) and gave no *positive* (11) to the young. However, when an earnest young student explained *that* he would like to become a (12) or a (13) in industry, and asked *about* courses to follow, the politician said, with a *curt* (14), "That's a silly *question* to ask me! I am a politician not a careers adviser!"

1 politics	<i>politician</i>	8 child	
2 leader		9 lazy	
3 define		10 cynic	
4 leader		11 guide	
5 dominate		12 politics	
6 free		13 manage	
7 encourage		14 dismiss	

2 Forming verbs

A -en, -ify, and -ize combine with nouns and adjectives to form verbs. Look at the following lists of adjectives and nouns. Put the corresponding verb in the space provided. The first one in each list has been done for you.

ADJECTIVE → VERB	NOUN → VERB
hard <i>harden</i>	horror <i>horrify</i>
modern	memory
deep	beauty
intense	sympathy
false	apology
fat	glory
sterile	length

B Now look at the following sentences. Complete them by writing down the correct form of one of the verbs in the lists above. Write the correct form in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 He *apologized* for interrupting her.
- 2 She tried to her room with posters and plants.
- 3 A study has been ordered into the feasibility of
..... the airport's main runway by two hundred metres.

- 4 However much they , they all felt it was her fault.
- 5 Soya is excellent food for cattle.
- 6 She laughed and that seemed to her voice.
- 7 £40,000 had been spent on the station.
- 8 the bottles by immersing them in boiling water for fifteen minutes.

3 Forming adjectives

A The following suffixes combine with verbs to form adjectives.

-able	-ible	-ed	-ful	-ive	-ing
-------	-------	-----	------	------	------

Look at the verb printed in **bold** and write down the appropriate adjective in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 Mr Quickwater has a great many *admirable*
qualities. **admire**
- 2 There was an story in the paper
this morning. **amuse**
- 3 I have extra French lessons with a
schoolmaster. **retire**
- 4 He made himself by handing
round the coffee cups. **use**
- 5 Deaths caused by reckless driving are
..... **avoid**
- 6 He felt very towards her and
loved her dearly. **protect**
- 7 The coat was in shades of blue
and green. **pattern**
- 8 She slept on a bed with rough,
prickly sheets. **collapse**
- 9 paper tissues are more hygienic
than handkerchiefs. **dispose**
- 10 The photos made him look quite **attract**

B The following suffixes combine with nouns and adjectives to form other adjectives.

-able	-al	-ary	-ful	-ic	-ish
-ive	-like	-ly	-ous	-y	

Look at the noun or adjective **printed** in bold and write down the appropriate adjective in the **space** provided. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 The time seemed to stretch **out** in a
dreamlike manner. **dream**
- 2 There is the danger of an
 explosion that could be caused by a gas leak. **accident**
- 3 She thought how he'd been
 and was not angry any more. **fool**
- 4 The newspapers printed a **shocking** and
 story. **shame**
- 5 The sky was and light rain
 was falling. **cloud**
- 6 The hotel was large and **comfort**
- 7 Judy was very about my
 work. **compliment**
- 8 Most tinned fruits contain
 amounts of sugar. **excess**
- 9 She is such a sweet-
 tempered child that everyone just naturally loves
 her. **friend**
- 10 There were two letters from Michael, warm,
 , and full of information. **humour**

4 Forming negatives

A large number of prefixes are used to form words with negative meanings. Some of the most common ones are listed below.

dis-	il-	im-	in-
ir-	non-	un-	

Now look at the words listed below. Write down their negative forms next to the appropriate prefix. The first one has been done for you.

legal	smoker	capable	practical	athletic
security	relevant	possible	obey	officially
agreement	loyal	happy	rational	willingness
logical	mature	responsible	ability	convenient

dis-

il- *illegal*

im-

in-

ir-

non-

un-

5 -able and -ible

-able and **-ible** combine with verbs to form adjectives. Look at the following list of verbs. Write down the corresponding adjective in the space provided. You will need to compare the entries for **-able** and **-ible** to see which ending is used. The first one has been done for you.

VERB	ADJECTIVE	VERB	ADJECTIVE
accept	<i>acceptable</i>	value	.....
divide	comprehend	.....
notice	irritate	.....
enjoy	depend	.....
convert	permit	.....

6 anti-

anti- can be used with two different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that one thing opposes another. Write 'B' if it means that one thing prevents another from happening.

- Following the appalling behaviour of the English football fans in Italy many people were anti-English.
.....

- Anti-seasickness tablets should be taken two hours before starting a journey.
.....

- 3 After fitting the anti-theft **d**evice to her car, she hoped it would not be stolen again.
.....
- 4 The anti-apartheid moveme**n**t in South Africa gained a lot of publicity when Nelson Ma**n**dela was released.
.....
- 5 Although it is more than **two** years since his wife died, he is still taking anti-depressants.
.....
- 6 Put anti-freeze in your radi**a**tor to prevent the water from freezing overnight.
.....
- 7 It was the first serious anti-**w**ar demonstration for fifteen years.
.....
- 8 Toothpastes containing fluori**d**e and anti-bacterial properties should be able to virtually eradicate tooth-decay.
.....
- 9 The General took control of **t**he army at the height of the anti-Ceausescu protests.
.....
- 10 The Church is managing to survive in the face of a great deal of anti-religious propaganda.
.....

7 -bound

A -bound can be used with three different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that someone or something is restricted in some way. Write 'B' if it means that someone or something is travelling in a particular direction. Write 'C' if it indicates the sort of covering that something has.

- 1 He removed a small, rectangular cloth-bound package from the bottom of his bag.
.....
- 2 No one seemed to have any idea what had happened to the luggage belonging to the four London-bound passengers.
.....
- 3 Britain is still considered by many to be a class-bound society.
.....

4 Morris Zapp slouched in the seat of the eastbound aircraft.
.....

5 Many young mothers become depressed because they are housebound.
.....

B Write one sentence for each of the words listed below to show that you understand what they mean.

class-bound duty-bound homeward-bound
leather-bound snowbound

8 cross-

Look at the statements below. Are they true or false? Write 'true' in the space provided if you think they are true. Write 'false' if you think they are false.

1 A cross-party agreement involves two or more political parties.
.....

2 A cross-channel ferry sails across more than one channel.
.....

3 A cross-border dispute occurs across the frontiers of different countries.
.....

4 A cross-cultural organization involves or deals with more than one culture.
.....

5 A cross-country race is a race in which two or more countries are involved.
.....

9 extra-

Choose a word from the box to complete the sentences on the next page. Write down the answer in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

extra-bright	extra-hot	extra-sensory	extra-terrestrial
extra-curricular	extra-long	extra-special	
extra-hard	extra-mild	extra-strong	

- 1 I'm going to buy you an *extra special* present as a reward for all your hard work this year at school.
- 2 Many students benefit greatly from involvement in activities.
- 3 Everyone agreed that this summer's exams were , which probably accounted for the high failure rate.
- 4 Because this house is going to be 3 storeys high, the foundations have to be
- 5 There has been a concentrated search for life on Mars.
- 6 Woollen clothes should be washed with an detergent.
- 7 I don't believe in perception, or flying saucers either.
- 8 children often get bored at school because the work is too easy.

10 -ful

-ful can be used with two different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it refers to a quantity. Write 'B' if it describes a quality.

- 1 He drank a mouthful of cold black coffee.
.....
- 2 My legs and back are stiff but not painful.
.....
- 3 He is one of the most powerful men in the country.
.....
- 4 He ate a bowl of natural yoghurt served up with a spoonful of honey.
.....
- 5 She had a whole houseful of furniture.
.....
- 6 The park lay quiet and peaceful in the early morning.
.....

7 He had nice sad eyes with beautiful lashes.
.....

8 Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them.
.....

9 Pour a bucketful of cold water on top of the ash.
.....

10 He was full of youthful curiosity and idealism.
.....

11 hyper-

Choose a word from the box to complete the sentences below. Write down the answer in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

hyperactive	hypercreative	hyperinflation	hypersensitive
hyper-alert	hyper-critical	hypermarket	
hyper-cautious	hyperdevoted	hyper-modern	

- 1 The man became *hypersensitive* to the slightest movement around him.
- 2 Boulogne and its are a popular destination for shoppers.
- 3 He had a small, vicious, dog, always on the look-out for intruders.
- 4 Teenagers tend to be of their own parents.
- 5 Councillors outlined plans for a shopping precinct in the city centre.
- 6 I found him to be much more lively than I expected, almost
- 7 The Chancellor took steps to stabilize the economy and cut
- 8 Many parents are and do not allow their children enough freedom.

12 -ion

-ion combines with verbs to form nouns. Look at the following list of verbs. Write down the corresponding noun in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

VERB	NOUN	VERB	NOUN
situate	<i>situation</i>	possess	.....
act	realize	.....
explain	connect	.....
decide	create	.....
produce	reduce	.....

13 -ism and -ist

Choose a word from the box to complete the sentences below. Write down the answer in the space provided. The first one has been done for you.

baptism	hooliganism	pessimist	typist
criticism	hypnotist	sexist	vegetarianism
feminism	optimist	terrorist	vandalism

- Many people still take their children to church for *baptism*
- Because I was such a I had assumed I would fail my exams.
- The popular image of unfortunately tends to repel many women.
- The Government is planning a crackdown on football violence and
- is becoming increasingly popular because of the unhealthy image of meat.
- advertising in women's magazines frequently infuriates me.
- She was a in the office of The Inspector of Taxes.
- The President warned troops of the increased danger of attacks.

- 9 Some severe public of the ban had been voiced.
- 10 I am an and I still believe the situation can only get better.

14 -less

Look at the statements below. Are they true or false? Write 'true' in the space provided if you think they are true. Write 'false' if you think they are false.

- 1 A person who is careless is unable to love or care for others.
.....
- 2 If you are expressionless, it is difficult for people to see how you are feeling.
.....
- 3 It is possible to become breathless when you are feverish.
.....
- 4 A tuneless piece of music has not been tuned to a particular radio station.
.....
- 5 If someone is spineless, they do not have a spine.
.....

15 off-

Look at the statements below. Are they true or false? Write 'true' in the space provided if you think they are true. Write 'false' if you think they are false.

- 1 If you buy an off-peak rail ticket, you are paying the highest price for it.
.....
- 2 An off-court argument between two tennis players happens away from the tennis court.
.....
- 3 An offshore oilrig is situated in the sea, away from the shore.
.....
- 4 If a soldier is off-guard, he has moved away from the place where he usually does his guard duty.
.....

- 5 If something is off-centre, it is not exactly in the middle of a space or surface.

.....

16 -over

A Put the words in the box into the following lists according to their meaning. The first one has been done for you.

over-anxious	overdo	overhang
overawe	over-eighteen	overhead
overcharge	over-emphasize	over-forty

EXCESS	AGE	POSITION
.....	<i>overhang</i>
.....
.....
.....
.....

B Write one sentence for each of the words listed below to show that you understand what they mean.

overdo overhang over-eighteen overcharge over-anxious

17 pre-

pre- can be used with two different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that one thing happens before another. Write 'B' if it means that something has already been done.

- I hate the pre-Christmas panic that seems to hit my family in the middle of December.
.....
- Eventually the pre-paid envelopes were sent from the mail order company.
.....
- His preconceived ideas made it impossible for anyone to get him to listen to their side of the argument.
.....
- There were many pre-fourteenth century portraits in the exhibition.
.....

5 The jury unanimously reached the decision that the killing was premeditated.
.....

6 He married late and his wife predeceased him.
.....

7 Bake the cake in a pre-heated oven for twenty minutes.
.....

8 Zoe had invited us round early for a pre-dinner drink.
.....

9 Some football players develop a special routine to cope with pre-match nerves.
.....

10 We had been given tickets to a preview of the film.
.....

18 -ship

Make sure you understand the different meanings of **-ship**. Underline the odd word out in each list and write a sentence to say in what way it is different.

1 workmanship, citizenship, musicianship, horsemanship.

2 chairmanship, ambassadorship, partnership, professorship.

3 spaceship, steamship, gunship, warship, cadetship.

4 membership, comradeship, friendship, relationship, kinship.

19 -size and -sized

What is the meaning of the suffixes **-size** and **-sized** in the following sentences? Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that one thing is the same size as another. Write 'B' if it means that something is a suitable size for a particular purpose. Write 'C' if it describes how big something is.

1 She bought a child-size bike for his 8th birthday.
.....

2 A new button-sized coin has just been issued by the Bank of England.
.....

3 Our new car? It's just an average-size family car.
.....

- 4 Although he detested eating liver, his aunt always insisted on putting a finger-size slice on his plate.
.....
- 5 Could you buy me a medium-size tin of peas and a jumbo-size packet of cornflakes?
.....
- 6 They always take a pocket-size calculator with them when they do the shopping.
.....
- 7 The racing car had a man-size space for the driver but no more.
.....

20 super-

The following sentences all contain words beginning with **super-**. The sentences have been divided in two and mixed up. Read both parts of all the sentences and decide which halves go together. Write the appropriate letter next to the numbers at the bottom.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 The vast supertankers we have nowadays | A must have been a superhuman feat. |
| 2 Jumping over that wall | B especially the super-heavyweights. |
| 3 A new superstore has just opened, | C super-modern design. |
| 4 My aunt loves watching wrestling and boxing, | D are a danger to the environment. |
| 5 The new office blocks were built to a | E and you can get almost anything you need there. |

1 2 3 4 5

21 under-

A Put the words in the box into the following lists according to their meaning. The first one has been done for you.

under-boiled	undergraduate	underpass
underclothes	underline	underpriced
under-equipped	under-manager	undersize
underestimate	undernourished	under-tens

BENEATH	INSUFFICIENT	NUMBER	RANK
.....	<i>under-equipped</i>	.....	.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

B Write one sentence for each of the words listed below to show that you understand what they mean.

underestimate undergraduate underline undernourished
under-tens

22 well-

Look at the statements below. Are they true or false? Write 'true' in the space provided if you think they are true. Write 'false' if you think they are false.

- If someone is well-nourished, they generally eat a lot of food.
.....
- A well-dressed man always wears smart or elegant clothes.
.....
- A well-cut suit is a suit that has been cut into many pieces.
.....
- If you have a pair of well-worn shoes, your shoes have been used so often that they look rather old.
.....
- If a theatre critic writes about a well-acted play, she means that there were a lot of people acting in the play and its duration was much longer than usual.
.....

6 If someone is well-balanced, they are balancing correctly so that they do not fall over.

.....

7 A well-known fact is known by a lot of people.

.....

8 If you refer to someone's well-being, you are referring to whether they are healthy and happy and enjoy their life.

.....

9 A well-read person has read a lot of books.

.....

10 Someone who is well-meaning uses words very precisely.

.....

Answer key

1 Nouns

A

- ant defend; assist
- ee train; address
- ess act, actor; prince
- er drive; paint
- ian history; music
- ist novel; science
- or supervise; visit

B

- 1 employee
- 2 politician
- 3 waitress
- 4 participant
- 5 conductor
- 6 teacher
- 7 pianist
- 8 examinee; examiner

C

- al arrive
- ance abundant
- cy constant
- dom king
- ence independent
- ful mouth
- hood boy
- ing dance
- ion invent
- ism criticize
- ity sensitive
- ment agree
- ness happy
- ship owner

D

- 1 politician
- 2 leadership
- 3 definition
- 4 leadership
- 5 domination
- 6 freedom
- 7 encouragement
- 8 childhood
- 9 laziness
- 10 cynicism
- 11 guidance
- 12 politician
- 13 manager
- 14 dismissal

2 Verbs

A

- ADJECTIVE → VERB
- harden
 - modernize
 - deepen
 - intensify
 - falsify
 - fatten
 - sterilize

NOUN → VERB

- horrify
- memorize
- beautify
- sympathize
- apologize
- glorify
- lengthen

B

- 1 apologized
- 2 beautify
- 3 lengthening
- 4 sympathized
- 5 fattening
- 6 deepen
- 7 modernizing
- 8 sterilize

3 Adjectives

A

- 1 admirable
- 2 amusing
- 3 retired
- 4 useful
- 5 avoidable
- 6 protective
- 7 patterned
- 8 collapsible
- 9 disposable
- 10 attractive

B

- 1 dreamlike
- 2 accidental
- 3 foolish
- 4 shameful
- 5 cloudy
- 6 comfortable
- 7 complimentary
- 8 excessive
- 9 friendly
- 10 humorous

4 Negatives

- dis- disability, disagreement, disloyal, disobey.
- il- illegal, illogical.
- im- immature, impossible, impractical.
- in- inability, incapable, inconvenient, insecurity.
- ir- irrational, irrelevant, irresponsible.
- non- non-athletic, non-smoker
- un- unhappy, unofficially, unwillingness.

5 -able and -ible

- acceptable
- divisible
- noticeable
- enjoyable
- convertible
- valuable
- comprehensible
- irritable
- dependable
- permissible

6 anti-

- 1 A
- 2 B
- 3 B
- 4 A
- 5 B
- 6 B
- 7 A
- 8 B
- 9 A
- 10 A

7 -bound

- 1 C
- 2 B
- 3 A
- 4 B
- 5 A

8 cross-

- 1 true
- 2 false. *A cross-channel ferry sails across the English Channel.*
- 3 true
- 4 true
- 5 false. *A cross-country race takes place across fields and the open countryside instead of along roads or a running track.*

9 extra-

- 1 extra-special
- 2 extra-curricular
- 3 extra-hard
- 4 extra-strong
- 5 extra-terrestrial
- 6 extra-mild
- 7 extra-sensory
- 8 extra-bright

10 -ful

- 1 A
- 2 B
- 3 B
- 4 A
- 5 A
- 6 B
- 7 B
- 8 A
- 9 A
- 10 B

11 hyper-

- 1 hypersensitive
- 2 hypermarket
- 3 hyper-alert
- 4 hyper-critical
- 5 hyper-modern
- 6 hyperactive
- 7 hyperinflation
- 8 hyper-cautious

12 -ion

- 1 situation
- 2 action
- 3 explanation
- 4 decision
- 5 production
- 6 possession
- 7 realization
- 8 connection
- 9 creation
- 10 reduction

13 -ism and -ist

- 1 baptism
- 2 pessimist
- 3 feminism
- 4 hooliganism
- 5 vegetarianism
- 6 sexist
- 7 typist
- 8 terrorist
- 9 criticism
- 10 optimist

14 -less

- 1 false. A careless person is someone who does not pay enough attention to what they are doing, with the result that they make mistakes.
- 2 true
- 3 true
- 4 false. It is a piece of music that has the notes arranged

in a random way or sounds unpleasant.

- 5 false. If someone is spineless they are weak and cowardly.

15 off-

- 1 false. An off-peak rail ticket would be cheaper than usual because you would use it at a time when there is less demand than usual.
- 2 true
- 3 true
- 4 false. If someone is off-guard, they are not expecting a surprise or danger that suddenly occurs.
- 5 true

16 over-

EXCESS: overawe, overcharge, overdo, over-emphasize, over-anxious
AGE: over-forty, over-eighteen
POSITION: overhead, overhang

17 pre-

- | | |
|-----|------|
| 1 A | 6 A |
| 2 B | 7 B |
| 3 B | 8 A |
| 4 A | 9 A |
| 5 B | 10 A |

18 -ship

- 1 Citizen-ship is the state of being a citizen. The other words all refer to a skill or ability.
- 2 A partnership is a relationship between two or more people. The other words all refer to positions or occupations.
- 3 Cadetship is the position or state of being a cadet. The other words all refer to types of boat or crafts.
- 4 Membership is the state of being a member. The other words all refer to a relationship or connection between two or more people or things.

19 -size and -sized

- 1 B
- 2 A
- 3 C
- 4 A
- 5 C
- 6 B
- 7 B

20 super-

- 1 D
- 2 A
- 3 E
- 4 B
- 5 C

21 under-

BENEATH: underclothes, underline, underpass
INSUFFICIENT: under-boiled, under-equipped, underestimate, undernourished, underpriced, undersize
NUMBER: under-tens
RANK: undergraduate, under-manager

22 well-

- 1 false. Someone who is well-nourished eats food that is good for them and keeps them healthy.
- 2 true
- 3 false. A well-cut suit has been designed and made to a high standard, and looks smart.
- 4 true
- 5 false. If someone describes a play as well-acted, they mean it has been performed to a high standard by the actors taking part in it.
- 6 false. If someone is well-balanced, they are sensible and do not have many emotional problems.
- 7 true
- 8 true
- 9 true
- 10 false. Someone who is well-meaning tries to be useful, helpful, or kind.

